Singular Thought and The Nonexistent

Lee Walters

UCL

PhD

I, Lee Walters, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Lee Walters

Abstract

I argue that a straightforward account of empty names can be given which allows them to contribute to the expression of thoughts, as *seems* to be the case. But that we can offer such an account does not mean that we should, as it should be conceded on all sides that what is happening in the case of empty names is radically different from what is happening in the case of non-empty names. Moreover, in the case of non-conniving uses of empty names, the subject is under a misapprehension, and so could be under the misapprehension that they are expressing a thought. Nevertheless, if we want to hold on to the truth of some singular negative existential claims, which is recognized as a desiderata even by those hostile to the intelligibility of empty names, we are forced to recognize that empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts. But once we make this admission we then open the door to empty names being used to express other thoughts too.

But that we can give a coherent account of empty names and singular negative existentials does not mean that we should be irrealists wherever we think we see empty names and true singular negative existentials. And I argue that this is the case with fictional names. There are good reasons to be realists about fictional characters, even though there are good reasons to accept that fictional names sometimes fail to refer and that as a result claims such as Sherlock Holmes does not exist are true. The solution is to accept that fictional names are ambiguous having a non-referring use and referring use. Such a position is well-motivated and plausible, and allows the realist to capture the truth of singular negative existentials in a straightforward manner. Moreover, since there are no metaphysical problems with this realism, we should embrace it.

Contents

Preamble

If a reference is reprinted in a collection mentioned in bibliography, then page references in the main text are to the reprinted version. If there is emphasis in a quoted passage, then unless specified otherwise, it is the quoted author's own emphasis.

I use 'distinct' throughout as a denial of identity. On my usage it does not mean or entail non-overlapping with.

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Introduction

I argue that a straightforward account of empty names can be given which allows them to contribute to the expression of thoughts, as *seems* to be the case. But that we can offer such an account does not mean that we should, as it should be conceded on all sides that what is happening in the case of empty names is radically different from what is happening in the case of non-empty names. Moreover, in the case of non-conniving uses of empty names, the subject is under a misapprehension, and so could be under the misapprehension that they are expressing a thought. Nevertheless, if we want to hold on to the truth of some singular negative existential claims, which is recognized as a desiderata even by those hostile to the intelligibility of empty names, we are forced to recognize that empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts. But once we make this admission we then open the door to empty names being used to express other thoughts too.

But that we can give a coherent account of empty names and singular negative existentials does not mean that we should be irrealists wherever we think we see empty names and true singular negative existentials. And I argue that this is the case with fictional names. There are good reasons to be realists about fictional characters, even though there are good reasons to accept that fictional names sometimes fail to refer and that as a result claims such as 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' are true. The solution is to accept that fictional names are ambiguous having a non-referring use and referring use. Such a position is well-motivated and plausible, and allows the realist to capture the truth of singular negative existentials. Moreover, since there are no metaphysical problems with this realism, we should embrace it.

Chapter 1: Empty Names

In this chapter we set out an approach which we argue provides an adequate treatment of empty names, if we wish to provide such a treatment. We do not, however, take a stand on whether we ought to provide such a treatment. In §1, we briefly consider a reason for providing a treatment of empty names, and a reason against providing such a treatment, arguing that neither reason is decisive. As such we should keep an open mind as to whether such an approach in needed. In §2 we outline the various options for such a treatment and argue in favour of negative free logic. In §3 we follow Sainsbury and provide a treatment of empty names within a truth-theoretic setting, arguing that such an approach is adequate whether or not empty names and non-empty names are to be treated uniformly. This sets the scene for our treatment of singular negative existentials in Chapter 2 and the complications that arise from the case of fictional characters which we discuss in the rest of the thesis.

1. Empty Names: For and Against

The claim that sentences involving empty singular terms fail to express propositions, starts from the attractive premise that some thoughts are, in some sense, object-dependent. Following Martin, let us think of object-dependence thus: a proposition is object-dependent iff its content "is constitutively dependent on the existence of the object or objects that the thought content is about" (Martin 2002: 4), so that "a mental state or episode which has the thought content in question as its content could only occur given the existence of the object being referred to or thought about" (Martin 2002: 5). Alternatively, we could follow Martin's (2002: 4 n8) suggestion of defining object-dependence solely in terms of the possibility of episodes of thought, rather than in terms of the existence conditions of the contents themselves. Such an approach allows for the possibility that the contents themselves necessarily exist, but that they are epistemically inaccessible in circumstances in which the relevant objects do not exist. Both the metaphysical and epistemic conceptions of object dependence have the important consequence that in the absence of the relevant objects, the thought content could not be entertained, and it is this that seems crucial to McDowell's characterization: "a singular thought is a thought that would not be available to be thought or expressed if the relevant object, or objects, did not exist" (McDowell 1982: 204).

McDowell thinks that from this starting point of object-dependence

> It follows that if one utters a sentence of the relevant sort, containing a singular term that, in that utterance, lacks a denotation, then one expresses no thought at all; consequently neither a truth nor a falsehood (1982: 204).

But does McDowell's conclusion really follow? As Martin notes in his discussion of perceptual experience, no object-dependent content can

> be entertained in a case of hallucination as normally conceived, where no appropriate candidate for the object of thought exists. Whether that should mean that no thought content at all could then be entertained, and in turn whether that means that no mental state or episode could then be occurring is a further matter (Martin 2002: 5).

That is, in the absence of *o* some sentence cannot express a singular content concerning o, but that leaves open that it expresses some *other* content, not dependent on *o*.

So does the claim that singular thoughts are object-involving support McDowell's conclusion? Only if, necessarily, any content expressed by a sentence containing a putatively referring term is an object-dependent one. Without this common kind assumption, McDowell's conclusion does not follow. All that object-dependence establishes is that the content expressed by a sentence with an empty singular term cannot be one dependent on some object in virtue of the presence of the empty name.[1]

Let us say that a name is Russellian iff (i) it can contribute to a sentence which expresses a thought, (ii) its ability to so contribute depends on its rigidly referring to an object and (iii) it belongs to a semantic category which contains only such terms. For McDowell, all names are Russellian, since no names can contribute to a thought if they are empty.

Sainsbury (2005a), on the other hand thinks that there are no Russellian names. This is because he thinks that some empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts, and that all names belong to the same semantic category. Sainsbury categorises all names together

[1] Of course the content may be object-dependent in virtue of the presence of some non-empty name.

since all names share the important feature that they purport to refer to an object, whether they in fact do.

But why does Sainsbury think that empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts. Quite simply, because it seems as if they do. If I tell a child that Father Christmas lives at the North Pole, my utterance seems completely intelligible, and what appears to be going on is similar to when I say that The Queen lives at Buckingham Palace. But Sainsbury must accept that this similarity belies a difference, since in the one case there is an object that we are describing and in the other case there is no such object. Because of this we can say that if sentences containing empty names express thoughts, the thoughts they express are not of the same kind as the thoughts expressed by sentences containing non-empty names, at least in the sense that the latter thoughts are object-dependent. (Even if we were to reject object-dependence, there is still a difference between the two thoughts on the approach to be advocated below and accepted by Sainsbury, since the truth of sentences containing non-empty names, depends upon the predicative material, whereas sentences with empty names are automatically false).

It is agreed on all sides that there is something similar and something different about such cases, both in terms of the names and the utterances/sentences. The question is whether we should categorize according to the similarities or according to the differences. McDowell wants to highlight the differences: empty names are not be categorized with referring names, and sentences containing empty names are not to be taken as expressing thoughts as sentences containing referring names are. Sainsbury on the other hand wants to categorize according to the similarities: all names belong to a single semantic class and sentences involving them express thoughts as do sentences containing non-empty names.

But there is a third possibility. We could agree with Sainsbury that empty names can contribute to thoughts, but deny that they are to be classified along with non-empty names. So here we see that there are three possibilities: there are only Russellian names, there are only non-Russellian names, there are both Russellian and non-Russellian names. All three approaches agree that something very different is going on in the case of empty names than in the case of referring expressions, but they differ as to whether this means that there is no thought at all expressed in the empty case, and whether all names form a uniform semantic category. Which approach we should adopt turns on which categories are most fundamental

to semantics. This is a question which we shall not decide, but which is not settled by appearance nor by object-dependence. We shall argue in this Chapter that we should keep an open mind. We should develop a treatment of empty names in case it is needed. As we argue in Chapter 2, however, there is one consideration which strongly suggests that we do need it.

2. Free Logic

> It is . . . an immediate consequence of recognizing names like 'Julius' in a language that classical logic must be modified. Evans (1982: 36).

Evans' point is not just that languages that include descriptive names, such as Julius, cannot be treated within classical logic, but rather that classical logic cannot be the correct logic for any language with meaningful empty names, descriptive or not. Evans puts the point in terms of descriptive names because these are the only empty names that he recognises. The question is, if we are to allow for the possibility of meaningful empty names, how should we amend classical logic?[2]

The minimal commitment of a free logic, a logic which allows for meaningful empty names, is to be free of the existence assumption of classical logic that validates $\exists x\ x=a$, namely that in every model, the interpretation function assigns every individual constant or name an entity from the domain over which the quantifiers range. Note that this characterization does not rule out that names will be assigned entities outside the domain by the interpretation function, nor that all names will be assigned objects.

Broadly speaking, there are three decision points when deciding upon which free logic is appropriate for a language containing empty names: i) what is the truth value of a (simple) sentence containing an empty name, ii) which entity, if any, is assigned to an empty name, and iii) what is the appropriate treatment of the quantifiers. We shall address the three questions in two parts. First, we shall discuss the different variety of free logics, arguing for a

[2] The issues that we'll consider here to do with the appropriate treatment of empty names are orthogonal to other debates about what is the correct logic. So, for example, if we reject classical logic in favour of intuitionistic logic on the basis of some argument of Dummett's, there is still the further question of how to modify intuitionistic logic to provide a treatment of empty names. What I say here applies even if we are working against the background of a non-classical logic (cf. Sainsbury 2005a: 74).

negative free logic which assigns no entity to an empty name. Second, I'll discuss the appropriate treatment of quantifiers within a free logic, and argue that even those who eschew a free logic ought to accept this treatment of the quantifiers.

2.1 Varieties of Free Logic

Free logics are traditionally split into three groups, depending upon what attitude they take towards the truth value of simple sentences containing non-referring singular terms, where a simple sentence is a sentence consisting of an n-place predicate concatenated with n referring expressions (Sainsbury 2005a: 66n9).[3] The three approaches to simple sentences traditionally taken by free logics are as follows (cf. Sainsbury (2005a: 66)):

> Positive Free Logic: Some simple sentences containing empty singular terms are true
>
> Neutral Free Logic: All simple sentences containing empty singular terms are neither true nor false.
>
> Negative Free Logic: All simple sentences containing empty singular terms are false.

Now, just as we can ask what is the appropriate attitude to take to simple sentences whose singular terms fail to refer?, we can also ask what is the appropriate attitude to take to predicates which correspond to a function which fails to partition all objects into its extension and its anti-extension?[4] We shall not pause to consider the appropriate treatment of such predicates here, but we should note that our taxonomy of free logics ignores this issue. This is not especially problematic in the case of empty names, but we should note that just as classical logic was a generalization of the Port Royal theory, being free of existence assumptions with respect to its general terms, and free logics are a generalization of classical logic, being free of existence assumptions with respect to its singular terms (Lambert 1991b),

[3] Sainsbury (2005a: 66n9) notes that a simple sentence will not be atomic if the referring expressions are semantically complex. Similarly, a simple sentence will not be atomic if the predicate is semantically complex. So here we are not dealing with Sainsbury's (2005b: 67n2) notion of a simple sentence which is framed in terms of non-complex predicates.

[4] Functions corresponding to predicates map objects on to truth values. The question I am raising is traditionally framed in term of such functions being partial functions, functions which fail to map all objects to a truth value (Evans 1982: 11). But we cannot follow this way of framing the issue here, since we are asking whether we should deny a truth value to sentences containing these defective predicates, and so do not want to build the answer in to the question.

there is room for a further generalization, which yields a logic free from the assumption that predicates partition all objects into an extension and an anti-extension. But we shall ignore this question in what follows as it seems to have no direct bearing on what we want to say in the case of empty names. For example, if we wish to say an empty name when combined with a non-defective predicate yields a falsehood, we shall hardly want to say that such a term yields a truth when combined with a defective predicate.

As specified, our definition of a positive free logic groups together a number of possibilities. First, it allows that all simple sentences containing empty names are true, although this is obviously not an attractive option. Second, limiting our concern to positive free logics where some simple sentences containing empty singular terms are not true, this allows that the rest are false, the rest are neither true nor false, or that some of the remaining sentences are false and some are neither true nor false. And for any positive free logic which allows that some simple sentences containing empty names are neither true nor false, we can distinguish between those logics which say that such sentences express a thought, those which say such sentences fail to express a thought, and those which say some such sentences express a thought whereas others do not

More interestingly, this traditional taxonomy of free logics is not exhaustive. In addition to our three options, there is the neglected alternative of allowing that some simple sentences containing an empty name are false, whereas the rest lack a truth value (whether or not they express a thought).[5]

Once we have determined the truth value, if any, of simple sentences containing empty terms, we can derive the truth value of complex sentences given our preferred treatment of logical and non-logical operators. For example, if we assume bivalence, the truth value of compound sentences in a positive or negative free logic is determined in exactly the same way as in the classical picture, or in whichever is our preferred background logic. In particular, the negations of all false sentences will be true, and so, in a negative free logic, the negation of any simple sentence containing an empty singular term will be true.

[5] Lambert (1991b) and Nolt (2011) define neutral free logic to allow that simple sentences of the form 'a exists' are false when 'a' is empty, although we are following Sainsbury's (2005a) classification here, at least in this respect. We consider the version of the neglected alternative that makes all sentences of the form 'a exists' false in our discussion of Wiggins' approach to negative existentials in Chapter 2.

2.2 Rejecting Neutral Free Logic

A neutral free logic can be motivated by the thought that there is something defective about sentences containing singular terms which fail to refer. This latter thought motivates two distinct positions. As we have seen, McDowell thinks that no thought whatsoever is expressed by a sentence containing an empty singular term. He therefore has no need to employ a free logic, since logic is concerned with the relations between propositions. Insofar as one wanted to subscribe to McDowell's views and yet maintain a logic for declarative sentences, one could do so by making conditional claims about the semantics and the rules of inference along the lines of 'if 's' is a simple sentence which expresses a proposition, it is true iff .....'.

An alternative view, which appears to have been Frege's (Evans 1982: Chapter 1), is that such sentences do express thoughts, but that such thoughts are neither true nor false. This is not to say they have some third truth-value, rather, they are truth-valueless; they result in a truth-value gap. This is the approach taken by neutral free logic.

If motivated by the thought that empty singular terms are defective, a neutral free logic will preserve the lack of truth value under embeddings, so that if P is without truth value, then so is ~P.[6] This would mean that if 'exists' is a first level predicate, and 'Vulcan' is an empty term, then 'Vulcan does not exist' is without truth-value, regardless of whether 'not' takes wide or narrow scope (see Chapter 2). But intuitively such singular negative existentials are true.

In any case, as Evans argues (1982: 24-25), it is hard to see why there could not be a wide-scope or global negation operator which takes any thought that is not true and returns a thought that is true. As such, there ought to be a reading of not-P which is true in a neutral free logic. We should note, however, that it is not built in to the notion of a neutral free logic that lack of truth value is preserved under embeddings, and so a neutral free logic is consistent with such an operator.[7] Of course, such a logic cannot be motivated by the Fregean thought that there is something defective about *all* sentences containing singular terms which

[6] This is the analogue of the classical position that maintains that if P is without truth value, so is OP where 'O' is a propositional operator. Of course, some *sentential* operators, such as '....' is true, can take a sentence which fails to express a proposition and return a proposition with a classical truth value.

[7] Compare Sainsbury's (2005a) non-exhaustive taxonomy which divides free logics into positive, negative and Fregean free logics, the latter being committed to *all* sentences containing an empty referring expression lacking a truth value.

fail to refer, but it could, perhaps, be motivated by the thought that there is something defective about *simple* sentences containing singular terms which fail to refer.

But even allowing for a global negation operator, a neutral free logic faces problems since such a logic validates the law of non-contradiction, ~(P & ~P), since even if P & ~P is neither true nor false, its negation will be true, which is reason enough to reject a neutral free logic.

But there are deeper difficulties. If P is neither true nor false, so that ~P is true, then ~~P is false, since a sentence is true iff its negation is false. But by double negation elimination we ought to be able to (classically, but not intuitionistically) derive the falsity of P contra the original starting point. Evans makes essentially the same point when he writes

> What can it mean on Frege's, or on anyone's, principles, for there to be a perfectly determinate thought which simply has no truth value? Remember that the notion of thought that Frege was intending to use had strong links with notions embedded in ordinary propositional-attitude psychology – the notions of belief, knowledge, memory, information, judgement, and so on. If someone understands and accepts a sentence containing an empty name, then, according to Frege, he thereby forms a belief; not a belief about language, but a belief about the world. But what sense can be made of a belief which has no truth-value – which is neither correct nor incorrect? Evans (1982: 24)[8]

So neutral free logic appears to have intolerable logical and semantic consequences, and so should be rejected. And what goes for neutral free logic, applies to the neglected alternative which has it that some simple sentences containing empty names express thoughts which are neither true nor false, and some to be false. The options that remain then are a positive free logic, a negative free logic, and the version of the neglected alternative which says some simple sentences containing empty terms are false whereas the rest fail to express a thought.

[8] The caveat regarding perfectly determinate thoughts is important, since many accept that when indeterminacy is in play, we can have a failure of bivalence.

2.3 Rejecting Positive Free Logic

There seem to be two motivations for a positive free logic. First, the following sentences all seem felicitous (ignoring issues of tense)

(1) Pegasus is winged
(2) The Greeks worshipped Zeus
(3) Sherlock Holmes lived at 221b Baker Street.

Assuming this felicity is best accounted for by the truth of the sentences, and further assuming that these are simple sentences with non-referring singular terms, then a positive free logic is required. We might, at least in the case of (2), doubt that what we have are examples of simple sentences. But leaving this to one side, and leaving questions of whether these specific sentences really contain empty singular terms, we have reason to doubt that these sentences are true.

First, although, for example, (3) is better than 'Sherlock Holmes lived on the moon', it is far from clear that we think that (3) is really true. We would not be surprised upon visiting 221b Baker Street to learn that Mr Holmes is not a resident there. Indeed, we would not, unless blissfully unaware of the Conan Doyle stories as fictions, visit Baker Street to meet Mr Holmes. So it seems that our attitude to (3), is not one of belief.[9] A second, more systematic reason for doubting the literal truth of these sentences is, as Burge argues, that we cannot substitute co-extensional terms *salva veritate* in these sentences. For example, we cannot move from (1) to 'Sherlock Holmes is winged' even though 'Pegasus' and 'Sherlock Holmes' do not differ in extension in virtue of the fact that they both fail to refer. Burge concludes then that these sentences, insofar as they are true "are best seen as an involving an implicit intensional context: '(A well-known myth has it that) Pegasus is winged'" (1974: 310). Although correct, Burge's conclusion may not go far enough. On the assumption that empty names necessarily do not denote, empty names are co-intensional as well as co-extensional, so that the true readings of sentences like (1) involve an implicit hyperintensional context (but see Dummett (1993a) for scepticism concerning the required modal assumption).

[9] Compare Walton's (1978) discussion of fear and quasi-fear.

So consideration of sentences such as (1) to (3) offers no real support for a positive free logic. The second consideration often given in favour of a positive free logic is that it alone can account for true identity statements involving empty names, such as 'Batman is Batman'. Lambert (1991c: 25) thinks such a sentence "follows from the unexceptionable identity principle 'x=x''.

But in what sense does 'Batman is Batman' follow from the logic of identity? Not by Universal Instantiation, as free logics must reject classical Universal Instantiation, limiting it in a way which excludes instantiating on empty names (see below). Nor does the fact that the predicate 'λx. x=x' is true of everything help, since Batman is not one of everything (Sainsbury 2005a: 66). Nor is it a priori or necessary that all strings of the form 'a=a' are true, as there are instances which are false. For example, 'Aristotle = Aristotle' is false when the first occurrence of 'Aristotle' refers to the philosopher but the second refers to the shipping magnate (Sainsbury 2005a: 67).

Regardless of whether or not we can prove by uncontentious principles of logic that identity statements involving empty names are obviously true, the claim that Batman is Batman has some intuitive plausibility, so we should examine whether a positive free logic is plausible.

Although I am assuming that Meinongianism is out of bounds, there is still the question of which entity, if any, is to be assigned to an intuitively empty term. Frege stipulated that all such terms referred to the null set, although to maintain appearances we could amend Frege's suggestion and say that the semantic value, but not the referent, of an intuitively empty term is the null set. Evans (1982: 32) seems to think this would be 'formally adequate',[10] but whatever he might have meant by that, it is clear that the proposal is not semantically adequate. As Burge notes, on this proposal, or on any structurally similar one, "we get unwanted identity statements such as Pegasus is identical with Hercules" (1974: 310). Moreover, if the null set is within the domain, as presumably it needs to be in some cases, we shall get unwanted existential commitments, since from Pegasus = Pegasus we shall be able to existentially generalize to derive ∃x x = Pegasus, which is precisely the conclusion free logics were designed to avoid (see below).

[10] Evans is actually considering a proposal where the semantic value of every singular term is a set, whereas the picture implicit in the above discussion is that intuitively empty terms are special in that they are all assigned the null set as their semantic value whereas every other singular term is assigned their usual referent as their semantic value. The points that follow do not depend on this.

The question is can we have the putative wanted identities without mechanisms which overgenerate and deliver unwanted identities? As Burge (1974: 318) shows, attempts to deliver the wanted identities fail to meet this desideratum. Lambert (1962) and Scott (1967) employ the following axioms respectively

(4) $\forall x\ (x \neq t_1\ \&\ x \neq t_2) \supset (t_1 = t_2)$

(5) $(\sim\exists x\ x{=}t) \supset t{=}*$ where '*' denotes an object outside of the object language

But these axioms imply that for any two empty terms, say 'Pegasus' and 'Batman', we can derive the false identity statement 'Batman is identical to Pegasus'. So such theories are empirically inadequate.

Grandy (1972) utilizes the following axiom

(6) If $\vdash C \supset \forall x\ (Fx \equiv Gx)$, then $\vdash C \supset (\iota x)\ Fx = (\iota x)\ Gx)$

which will not yield all of the wanted true identities, since it says nothing about proper names. Moreover, as Burge notes, in any theory which contained the following true statement as an axiom

(7) $\forall x$ (Present King of France (x) ≡ Unicorn on the Moon (x))

Grandy's axiom gives the unwanted result that the present King of France is identical to the unicorn on the Moon. Perhaps then, we should simply exclude such contingent, empirical non-logical axioms as (7), thus avoiding the problematic entailment. But we side here with Burge who thinks that the fact that whether or not we can derive these problematic results turns on which axioms we have in place is "arbitrary and unintuitive" (Burge (1974: 318). In any case, Grandy's axiom is inadequate since $\vdash \forall x\ (Fx \equiv Gx) \supset \forall x\ (Fx \equiv Gx)$ is clearly true, whereas $\vdash \forall x\ (Fx \equiv Gx) \supset (\iota x)\ Fx = (\iota x)\ Gx)$ is false, when the antecedent is nonvacuously true, since there may be exactly two things which are F, both being the only two things which are G.

So, all of the positive free logical approaches to identity statements that Burge considers are to be rejected. Be that as it may, Burge has not demonstrated that we cannot be rid of the unwanted identities without preserving all instances of the schema a=a. Nevertheless, he has posed an explanatory challenge to positive free logicians. What is clear is that such an account cannot be given in terms of simple universal generalizations. It might, however, be possible, for instance, to appeal distinct name-using practices (Sainsbury 2005a: Chapter 3) to generate the supposedly wanted identities without generating the unwanted identities. Of course, if we only appealed to such practices we would undergenerate true identity statements in the case of referring singular terms, but identity statements involving distinct co-referring terms would be secured by a sister principle of Lambert's above, namely

(8) $\forall x\ (x = t_1\ \&\ x = t_2) \supset (t_1 = t_2)$.

We do have a more systematic reason for thinking that there are no true identity statements involving empty names, however. Any such statement, t=t, is inconsistent with

(9) $Ft \supset \exists x\ x=t$

which is encapsulated by Burge's axiom (A9), since a substitution instance of 'F' is 't='. But surely (9) is compelling? Burge thinks that appeals to intuition over the relative merits of the schema t=t and (9) will not settle the matter, and that the decision whether or not to allow true identity statements involving empty terms "must rest on more general considerations" (1974: 322).

Now, as highlighted above, Burge thinks that non-referring terms ought to be able to be substituted salva veritate in extensional contexts. Indeed, as I noted, perhaps they ought to substitutable salva veritate in intensional contexts. Neither identity elimination nor Leibniz's Law will guarantee this (Burge (1974: 314)). In order to secure this result without relying on unwanted identities, Burge adds the following axiom to his logic (his (A8))

(10) $\forall x\ (x=t \equiv x=t^*) \supset A(y/t) \equiv A(y/t^*)$, where x is not free in t or t*

Now if we allowed true identity statements involving empty names, we would not be able to employ this axiom to explain why empty terms can be substituted salva veritate in extensional contexts, since it would allow us to derive a true identity statement involving any term empty terms. One way round this problem, would be to simply exclude identity statements from the scope of (10). This would, however, be ad hoc, and noticing this, I think, points to a deeper, more systematic reason for rejecting true identity statements involving non-referring singular terms.

> An extremely intuitive feature of Tarski's theory of truth is that it explicates what it is for a sentence to be true in terms of a relation (satisfaction) between language (open sentences) and the world (sequences of objects). The notion of correspondence which had always seemed so integral to truth came clean in Tarski's theory. ... It is difficult to see how the purported truth of, say, [Pegasus = Pegasus] can be explicated in terms of a correspondence relation.
>
> Loosely speaking, self-identity is a property of objects and all objects have it; sentences expressing identities are true or false by virtue of the relation that the identity predicate and its flanking singular terms bear to the world-never merely by virtue of the identity of the singular terms. Philosophical questions regarding identity seem bound to the notions of existence and object (Burge 1974: 322-323).

Burge goes on to say that this can all be captured by the following

(11) $\exists y\ y=t \equiv t=t$

The left-to-right direction of (11) is uncontroversial. The right-to-left direction of (11) is an instance of (9) above, which we capture with the following

> The Existence Principle: For all t and for all F, Ft only if $\exists x\ x=t$

In a systematic account of the truth of simple sentences, subject-predicate sentences of the form Fa, there seem to be two options for accounting for when they are true and false, both of which return the same verdict on when they are true:

> Ockhamist Truth Conditions: Fa is true iff the referent of 'a' satisfies F. It is false otherwise.
>
> Strawsonian Truth Conditions: Fa is true iff the referent of 'a' satisfy F, it is false iff the referent of 'a' fails to satisfy F. It is truth-valueless otherwise.

A positive free logic provides neither Ockhamist nor Strawsonian truth conditions. (Neither does the neglected alternative, although as its truth conditions are a disjunction of Ockhamist and Strawsonian truth conditions, it retains the feature of both of these approaches that simple sentences with empty names are never true). Both Ockhamist and Strawsonian truth conditions respect The Existence Principle. As we have seen, the no thought view of McDowell provides Strawsonian truth conditions. Negative free logics, on the other hand, provide Ockhamist truth conditions.

The motivation for a negative free logic then, is that simple sentences containing empty names can express determinate thoughts, and, contra neutral free logic, the determinate thoughts are either true or false. But given that the world does not match the thought, the thought must be false. This is what is summed-up in the Ockhamist truth conditions above.

Burge's (1974) explication of a negative free logic, avoids the unwanted identities discussed above, but also allows for the straightforward substitution of different non-referring terms in simple sentences and other extensional, indeed other intensional, contents. Burge's system, like any negative free logic, does not validate t=t, although it does validate $\forall x\ x=x$. As we have seen, although many instances of t=t have some intuitive appeal, systematic considerations support the view that these identity statements are in fact false, and so a negative free logic in fact delivers the correct result. And Evans himself assumes a negative free logic is the correct logic for dealing with empty names such as 'Julius'. This will be the logic we shall assume if we want to allow for possibility of empty names.[11]

[11] But see our discussion of the neglected alternative in Chapter 2.

2.4 Principles for Quantifiers

Within a free logic, the introduction and elimination rules of classical logic cannot be maintained. In particular, no free logic can accept all three of the following:

> *Identity Introduction:* At any stage infer ∀x x=x
>
> *Universal Instantiation*: From ∀x Ax infer A(t/x) (where 'A(t/x)' is the formula which results from 'Ax' by replacing every occurrence of 'x' by 't').
>
> *Existential Generalization*: From A(t/x) infer ∃x Ax[12]

Since together they yield the conclusion that for any empty name, 'n', there is something which is identical to n:

(12) ∀x x=x Identity Introduction

(13) n=n Universal Instantiation

(14) ∃x n=x Existential Generalization

But (14) is precisely the conclusion the free logician rejects: the raison d'être of a free logic is to allow for the possibility that some (meaningful) names are not the names of anything. So the conjunction of these three classical rules cannot be maintained in a free logic.

A free logician has no reason to abandon Identity Introduction, which says of everything, that it is identical to itself. Free logicians can, and should accept this, as the issue of empty names does not bear upon this obvious and necessary truth. Indeed, free logicians do accept Identity Introduction and instead question Universal Instantiation and Existential Generalization.[13] But how exactly should free logicians block the conclusion above; what should their attitudes be towards Universal Instantiation and Existential Generalization? Sainsbury says the following:

[12] These rules are adapted from Sainsbury's formulation of free logical quantifier rules (2005a: 65). We should note that in the case of Universal Instantiation, A(t/x) has to be the result of replacing *every* occurrence of 'x' by 't', otherwise we can move from ∀x x=x to ∀x x=a, which is false. This differs from Existential Generalization, where A(t/x) can be the result of replacing as many instances of 'x' by 't' as one likes.

[13] Identity Introduction is sometimes given by the following alternative schema: at any stage infer t=t. As we have seen, negative and neutral free logicians have to reject this. But we see this alternative formulation as being derived from the interaction of Identity Introduction and Universal Instantiation as we have given them. And once Universal Instantiation is restricted as per our discussion below, we no longer get t=t when 't' is empty.

> There is general agreement that providing a formal system suitable for representing a language containing empty referring expressions requires changes to the quantifier rules. One may instantiate only using a non-empty term, and one may generalize only with respect to a non-empty term. One could put this into effect by replacing the classical quantifier rules by the following:
>
> > *Universal Instantiation*: From ∀x Ax and ∃x x=t infer A(t/x) (where 'A(t/x)' is the formula which results from 'Ax' by replacing every occurrence of 'x' by 't').
> >
> > *Existential Generalization*: From A(t/x) and ∃x x=t infer ∃x Ax
>
> Free logicians are united in accepting such quantifier rules (Sainsbury 2005a: 65).

We should first note that Sainsbury's informal gloss differs from his formulation of Universal Instantiation and Existential Generalization. In his informal gloss he talks of limiting the rules to non-empty terms, whereas he explicitly restricts the rules by adding the requirement ∃x x=t. Perhaps these distinct conditions are necessarily co-extensive, but for all that has been said the possibility opens up of intensionally distinct formulations of free logical quantifier rules, one which adds the condition 't' refers, and one which adds the condition ∃x x=t.[14]

Universal Instantiation needs to be modified along the lines Sainsbury suggests. Negative and neutral free logicians reject that 'n=n' is true when 'n' fails to refer. Even positive free logicians, such as Lambert, who allow that 'n=n' is true when 'n' is empty have to reject Universal Instantiation. This is because ∀x ∃y x=y is a logical truth, from which classical Universal Instantiation allows us to infer the unwanted conclusion ∃y n=y. So Universal Instantiation must be rejected along the lines Sainsbury suggests.

[14] Similarly, one might restrict the rules in terms of an existence predicate, E, allowing Universal Instantiation and Existential Generalization only when Et. But since we ought to accept that □ (Et ≡ ∃x x=t), this formulation cannot come apart from Sainsbury's official formulation.

But once we have rejected Universal Instantiation, we have addressed the route to the problematic conclusion, so is there any need for the free logician to reject the classical formulation of Existential Generalization?

Positive free logicians clearly have to reject Existential Generalization along Sainsbury's lines as they allow some simple sentences containing empty names to be true. For example, if with Lambert, the positive free logician accepts 'n=n' when 'n' is empty, then classical Existential Generalization allows us to derive our unwanted conclusion, $\exists x\ n=x$.

Negative and neutral free logicians, however, have no problem maintaining classical Existential Generalization for simple sentences, as they admit no true simple sentences containing empty names.[15] But negative and neutral free logicians cannot accept classical Existential Generalization in the face of truth-functional compounds containing empty names to be true. Consider the following sentence:

(15) $\sim\exists x\ x=a$

When 'a' is empty, (15) is true for the negative free logician, and it will be true for the neutral free logician, when '~' is treated as a global or wide-scope negation operator (cf. Evans 1982: 24). If, on the other hand, the neutral free logician is like Sainsbury's Fregean free logician, maintaining that no compound sentence containing an empty name is either true or false, then he need not restrict existential generalization. If Existential Generalization is unrestricted, we can derive

(16) $\exists y \sim\exists x\ x=y$

which is necessarily false. As a result Existential Generalization must be restricted for all free logicians. And regardless of their particular differences, free logicians must in any case reject classical Existential Generalization since it is equivalent to classical Universal Instantiation. That is, Universal Instantiation represented by an axiom is $\forall x\ Fx \rightarrow Ft$, which by contraposing and the definition of '$\exists x$' yields $\sim Ft \rightarrow \exists x \sim Fx$, which is the corresponding axiom for existential generalization.

[15] As Sainsbury (2005a: 65n8) himself notes.

But it does not follow from these observations that the negative or neutral free logician need restrict Existential Generalization along the lines Sainsbury suggests. Indeed, as we have seen, Existential Generalization, classically construed, is valid for simple sentences in negative and neutral free logics. This suggests then, that instead of Sainsbury's formulation of Existential Generalization, the negative or neutral free logician can restrict Existential Generalization to simple sentences to avoid the problems we have discussed so far. And indeed, this is the route taken by Evans (1982: 37) and Burge (1974: 312 – see his axiom A9).[16]

Is there any reason to prefer the Burge-Evans' version of Existential Generalization to Sainsbury's, or vice versa? To employ Sainsbury's version of free logical existential generalization, we need to know when we are licensed to the additional premise required for it, namely $\exists x\ x=t$. The obvious suggestion is that we can infer $\exists x\ x=t$ from any simple sentence of the form Ft. So Sainsbury's version of Existential Generalization in effect breaks down the Burge-Evans' version into two steps for simple sentences. Moreover, Evans himself will want to add the rule that we can infer $\exists x\ x=t$ from any simple sentence of the form Ft, so it might seem that Sainsbury's version is more fundamental in some sense. But we can modify Evans' rule and allow that from any simple sentence Ft we can infer both $\exists x\ x=t$ and $\exists x\ Fx$, noting that these are both existential generalizations, one saying that the general term is non-empty, as mandated by the Port Royal theory, the other saying the subject terms is non-empty, as mandated by classical logic.

It might be objected that if we adopt the simple sentence restriction on Existential Generalization like Burge and Evans we lose something. For example, when a exists, we should be able to move from $\sim Fa$ to $\exists x \sim Fx$, but given that $\sim Fa$ is not a simple sentence we cannot on employ this version of existential generalization to achieve this result. It is true that we cannot move via Existential Generalization from the premise here to the desired conclusion directly, but it does not follow that the adherent of the Burge-Evans' formulation of Existential Generalization cannot account for the validity of the above inference. And in

[16] Burge (1974: 312-313) formulates his negative free logic in terms of atomic predicates. But there is no need as a negative free logic can, and should, say that any simple sentence containing an empty name is false, even if the predicates are themselves complex. Similarly, he need not restrict existential generalization to simple sentences containing atomic predicates, but rather just to simple sentences, regardless of whether they contain complex predicates.

fact no complex sentence of this type presents a problem. Any complex sentence will be of the form OFa, where 'O' represents a sequence of operators. When 'a' exists we ought to be able to conclude ∃x OFx. We can do so in the following way

(17)	OFa	Premise
(18)	∃x x=a	Premise
(19)	∀x ~OFx	Assumption
(20)	~OFa	Universal Instantiation, (18), (19)
(21)	OFa & ~OFa	&I, (17), (20)
(22)	~∀x ~OFx	~I, (19), (21)
(23)	∃x OFx	Interdefinability of quantifiers

So I don't think we lose anything if we adopt the Burge-Evans' approach.

But I do think we gain something. First, as noted above, we can derive the additional premise of ∃x x=t that Sainsbury needs in order to employ his version of Existential Generalization. Second, consider Quine's famous example

(24) Giorgione was so-called because of his size

We cannot move from (24) to

(25) ∃x x is so-called because of his size

as the latter does not make any sense. But ∃x x=Giorgione, so we ought to be able to existentially generalize, if this is restricted in terms of existence. It might be objected that quantifier rules are not to be applied to natural language sentences which do not show their logical form. Once we have a sentence which displays (24)'s logical form, a candidate being

(26) Barbarelli was called 'Giorgione' because of his size

we can existentially generalize to yield the true

(27) ∃x x was called ‘Giorgione’ because of his size

But part of the rationale for a free logic is to provide a logic of natural language sentences, and we cannot apply Sainsbury’s version of existential generalization to natural language sentences like (24). The reason why not is because ‘was so-called because of his size’ is not a predicate, so it seems that restricting existential generalization to simple sentences *explains* why we cannot existentially generalize into (24).

Similarly, as Quine noted, we cannot substitute ‘Barbarelli’ salva veritate for ‘Giorgione’ in (24) as

(28) Barbarelli was so-called because of his size

is false. Does this observation threaten identity elimination, from Fa and a=b infer Fb, or Leibniz’s law which underpins it? No it does not, because replacing ‘Giorgione’ with ‘Barbarelli’ in (24) is not an instance of identity elimination, since ‘was so-called because of his size’ is not a predicate, not an instance of F. Just as Williamson (1989: 98) observes that we should distinguish the physical act of substituting a name for a variable from the syntactic operation of predication, we should also distinguish the physical act of substituting a bound variable for a name from the operation of existential generalization.[17] In any case, since we accept that □(∃F Ft ≡ ∃x x=t) either version of existential generalization will do for neutral and negative free logicians.

The negative free logical approach to existential generalization helps us to solve a problem raised by Wiggins (1995: 99-101). Wiggins notes that whereas

(29) ~∃x x=Julius Caesar

is contingently false, its existential generalization

(30) ∃y ~∃x x=y

[17] See Stalnaker (1977) and McCarthy and Phillips (2006) for more reasons to distinguish between complex formulas and complex predicates especially when dealing with existential claims. Stalnaker also provides reasons for formulating existential generalization in terms of predicates which are independent of our concerns.

is necessarily false. But a contingently false premise cannot validly take us to an impossible conclusion, as the argument schema □(P ⊃ Q) ⊃ (◊P ⊃ ◊Q) is valid. Wiggins' own solution is not to give up existential generalization in full generality, but to note that although Fa ⊃ ∃x Fx is valid, its necessitation □(Fa ⊃ ∃x Fx) need not be, if formulas containing 'a' when empty have no truth value, Fa ⊃ ∃x Fx is only necessarily true on the presupposition that a exists. As Wiggins (1995: 101) says, "[a]ll that existential generalization has to preserve is truth, not modal status".

But this way out of the puzzle is not open to free logicians, since Fa is false when 'a' is empty, and so Fa ⊃ ∃x Fx true. Hence, for the free logician, unlike Wiggins, Fa ⊃ ∃x Fx *is* necessarily true. This then puts pressure on existential generalization. But, as Wiggins notes, if Fa is true then we *can* move to ∃x Fx and "[i]f this is all it amounts to, then the principle of existential generalization cannot be invalid" (Wiggins 1995: 100). I concur. Moreover, as I have argued above, this is what existential generalization does amount to. But we can square the circle for the negative free logician by noting, as before, that on the contingently false reading of (29), we do not have an instance of Fa. Existential generalization can be applied to simple sentences with complex predicates, but not to complex sentences such as (29).

Wiggins considers a second problem concerning the classical rules for quantifiers. As noted above, from

(31) ∀y ∃x x=y

we can derive by universal instantiation

(32) ∃x x=Julius Caesar.

The problem emerges because (31) is a necessary truth, and since anything that follows from a necessary truth is itself necessary, that is, (□ (P ⊃ Q)) ⊃ (□P ⊃ □Q), we can derive

(33) □(∃x x=Julius Caesar)

which is false. Similarly, as Rumfitt (2003: 480) notes, ∃y a=y is a theorem of classical logic, as we saw above when introducing this section, and so is necessarily true assuming classical logic and necessitation. But even those who think there are no empty names, should regard □(∃y a=y) as false. As we have seen we can reach ∃y a=y from the uncontroversial identity introduction with universal instantiation and existential generalization, so at least one of these latter rules must go. In fact the two observations above also show that even those who eschew empty names should restrict both quantifier rules. That is, with classical universal instantiation, we can move from a necessary truth, ∀x ∃y x=y, to a contingent truth, ∃y a=y, and so classical universal instantiation cannot be valid. Similarly, we can move from a contingent falsehood, ~∃y a=y, to a necessary falsehood, ∃x~∃y x=y, with classical existential generalization, and so this rule also cannot be valid.

Wiggins suggests that his solution to the problem with existential generalization above can be employed with respect to the problem with universal instantiation

> On the supposition of Caesar's existence, we cannot go from a truth to a falsehood in passing from 'everything is Φ' to 'Caesar is Φ'. But the 'cannot' here is Caesar-relative or presuppositive of Caesar. No simple necessity, no necessity for all worlds, is thereby shown to attach to the conditional 'If everything is Φ, Caesar is Φ' Wiggins (1995: 102).

Wiggins' proposal is equivalent to that of the negative free logicians, so even those who think that sentences containing a use of an empty name do not express thoughts have reason to restrict the quantifier rules in the way advocated by the negative free logician. But this is not to endorse a free logic: the truth value of simple sentences containing empty names is one thing, the correct quantifier rules are another. In any case, both the classical logician who wants to allow for the above seemingly contingent truths, and the free logician, must adopt quantifier rules similar to those outlined above. These will be assumed in what follows.

3. Truth Theory

If we are to provide a treatment of empty names then, we should adopt a negative free logic, and in any case we should adopt the quantifier rules such a logic embraces. But how else should we accommodate empty names in our theorizing? It is easy enough to treat them in a model theory as long we follow the lessons from Burge above (see Sainsbury 2005a Chapter 2, §3 for an outline of this approach). That is, for intuitively non-referring terms, we assign to them no entity and not an entity from an outer domain which will generate unwanted identities. Moreover, the approach of assigning entities to empty names does not wear its ontological commitments on its sleeve.

But what approach to *meaning* should a treatment of empty names take? Empty names cannot express Russellian propositions since there is no object to be a part of the proposition. Braun (1993) suggests that sentences containing empty names express gappy Russellian propositions, but it is really not clear what the metaphysics of Russellian propositions would have to be in order to allow them to have gaps. In any case, since the negative free logician accepts that simple sentences containing empty names are automatically false, regardless of the predicative material in the rest of the sentence, it is not clear that we want to distinguish, at the level of Russellian proposition, between such sentences since the predicative material plays no role in determining the truth value of such sentences. Simple sentences containing empty names purport to, but do not, describe a specific way the world is, and so they do not need to be treated differently at the level of reference.

Of course, this does not mean that we should not distinguish between distinct sentences containing empty names at the level of understanding. One way of doing this is to follow Davidson's (1967) lead by using a theory of truth to serve as a theory of meaning. McDowell (1977) drawing an analogy between Davidson and Frege, argues that names in an extensional fragment of a truth theory could be handled by axioms of the form

(34) 'n' refers to n[18]

So, for example, one such axiom would be

[18] McDowell does not use this schema, but it is clear that this is the schema which underlies the various axioms he employs.

(35) ‘Hesperus’ refers to Hesperus

But since Phosphorus is Hesperus, the following is also true

(36) ‘Hesperus’ refers to Phosphorus

Now although both *state* the reference of ‘Hesperus’, McDowell contends that only the first *shows* its sense. We can see this by noting that we can understand ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ without knowing that it is true. But of course if the axioms for ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ were not given homophonically but in terms only of Phosphorus or only in terms of Hesperus, this would not be possible. Similarly, utterances of ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ would often be pointless just as, often, ‘Hesperus is Hesperus’ is.

We should note that such a picture of sense does not support McDowell’s contention that empty names cannot figure in thought expressing sentences. McDowell notes that empty names cannot “be handled in a theory of sense in the style I have considered so far” (1977: 185). This is because an instance of (34) can only be true when ‘n’ refers and so cannot be used in an adequate treatment of empty names.

Now although McDowell is correct that his axioms for proper names cannot account for meaningful empty names, it does not follow from this that there are no acceptable axioms for the treatment of empty names in a truth theory which can serve as a theory of sense. Indeed Evans (1982: 35-38) notes, when considering the type of approach McDowell is advocating, that although axioms like (34) cannot be used for empty names, axiom schemas such as

(37) $\forall x$ (‘n’ refers to x iff x = n)

can be. And this is the suggestion advocated by both Burge (1974) and Sainsbury (2005a).[19]

[19] Although Evans is not actually endorsing this approach, favouring an interpretational semantics, it is not clear that he is entitled to such schemas by his own lights. For Evans, sense is a mode of presentation of semantic value. But what axioms like (37) show, if anything, is a mode of presentation of a *referent*. But in the empty case, the semantic value of a term cannot be identified with the term’s referent and so schemas like (37) cannot show the term’s mode of presentation of its semantic value and hence cannot show the sense of any empty term for Evans. In any case, what we are concerned with here is understanding and truth conditions, not sense as a mode of presentation of semantic value.

Assuming a negative free logic, which we are in any treatment of empty names, 'x=n' is false when 'n' is empty, as is ''n' refers to x', and so (37) is true, when 'n' is empty. So here we have a McDowell-style austere conception of sense which does give sense to empty names.

Now although suggested by Evans for empty names only, (37) is extensionally adequate for all names. Instances of (37) are satisfied in the case of non-empty names since if n is non-empty 'n' refers to n and all and only those things identical with it. Further, since

(38) 'Hesperus' stands for Hesperus.

is classically equivalent to

(39) $\forall x$ ('Hesperus' refers to x iff x = Hesperus).

we can use (37) as an axiom schema for all names including any Russellian names in either a negative free logic or a classical logic (Sainsbury 2006: 2).

So, if we want to allow for the possibility of empty names in this way, we *must* adopt axioms like (37). Moreover, we *can* employ axioms such as (37) even for non-empty names including any Russellian names. And so we have the option of adopting a uniform truth-theoretic approach to names, rather than the disjunctive model that Evans considers in *The Varieties of Reference*, where non-Russellian names are handled by (37) and Russellian names are treated by (34).

So here we can see that although McDowell (1977) was correct that an axiom like (34) could not be provided for empty names, a truth-theoretic semantics can nevertheless accommodate empty names, by employing axioms along the lines of (37). Moreover, such an approach maintains the advantages of McDowell's approach whilst allowing for empty names. It, like McDowell's approach, is an austere approach, as it does not analyze the meanings of the object language's words, but rather reuses them in the metalanguage. And such an approach is not descriptivist. As Sainsbury puts it, such an approach

makes no concessions to descriptivism about proper names, even though it allows the possibility of a content without a referent. Accordingly, it pulls apart two ideas which risk being merged. In the first sentence of "De re senses," McDowell sets up as a target a supposedly Fregean view according to which there is a kind of:

> content that determines the object by specification, or at least in such a way that the content is available to be thought or expressed whether the object exists or not. (McDowell 1984: 283)

The first disjunct expresses the familiar idea of descriptivism; the second disjunct expresses a view which might loosely be labelled object-independent content. It is easy to see that the free logical approach is not descriptivist, and so is not the target of the first disjunct. The second disjunct is ambiguous between the claim that there are contents which have their objects essentially, a claim [which can be] accepted by the negative free logician, and the claim that there are no singular contents lacking objects, a claim the negative free logician rejects. (2006: 3)

So we *can*, like Burge (1974) and Sainsbury (2005), capture the semantics of names in a truth theory with a single axiom schema, and remain neutral over whether there are any Russellian names or whether there are any non-Russellian names. Such neutrality, does not extend to our choice of logic, however. Axioms along the lines of (37) can be embedded within classical logic or within a free logic, but if we want to allow for empty names, we must, as we have seen, reject classical logic in favour of a free logic, and in particular in favour of a negative free logic.

If we accept (37) as opposed to (34), however, a problem emerges if we want to allow both for the possibility of empty names and of Russellian names. Sainsbury adopts (37) as he thinks that all names belong to a single semantic category (Sainsbury 2005a: vii). But we might want to contest this, even if we agree with Sainsbury that empty names have a sense. Although (34) and (37) are equivalent in classical logic, they are not equivalent in a negative free logic. (34) is strictly stronger than (37). But the relevant point to note is that, in a free

logic, however existential generalization is formulated, only (34) and not (37) licenses existential generalization. So it seems that (37) is not suitable for Russellian names. This is not a problem for anyone who thinks there are no Russellian names, but it is problematic for those who wish to remain neutral on this issue: a commitment to the meaningfulness of empty names does not commit one to treating empty and non-empty names alike.

The solution, however, is obvious. Instead of adopting (37) across the board as recommended by Sainsbury, we return to the disjunctive model offered by Evans. That is, in virtue of their semantic differences, we treat Russellian and non-Russellian names differently. Russellian names are to treated by axioms like

(40) 'Hesperus' refers to Hesperus[20]

whereas non-Russellian names are to be treated by axioms such as

(41) ∀x ('Julius' refers to x iff x=Julius)[21]

As (40) is a simple sentence, (40) entails that Hesperus exists, whereas, since (41) is not a simple sentence, it does not entail the existence of Julius. And this is the desired result: our truth theory can give the required profile to both Russellian and non-Russellian names. But there is a residual problem. As Sainsbury (2005b) notes, axioms for both Russellian and non-Russellian names can be used to derive homophonic truth theorems such as

(42) 'Hesperus is visible' is true iff Hesperus is visible
(43) 'Julius is tall' is true iff Julius is tall.

[20] Alternatively, we could follow Sainsbury (2005b: 74) and use axioms of the form [Hesperus] ∀x ('Hesperus' refers to *x* iff *x* = Hesperus), for Russellian names. Such axioms are logically equivalent, both in classical and negative free logic, to Evans' axioms such as (40). Perhaps Sainsbury's formulation allows us to see more clearly the similarity and the difference between Russellian and non-Russellian names.

[21] Evans' position is a little odd since although he wants to treat Russellian and non-Russellian names differently, he thinks of them belonging to a single semantic category (Evans 1982: 31). But then, as we have categorized Russellianism, he is not a Russellian. Rather, like Sainsbury, he accepts that there are names with object-dependent senses and names that lack such senses which belong to a single semantic category. We shall take it that the fact that he does want to treat descriptive and non-descriptive names with different axioms means that ultimately, he thinks that they do not belong to the same semantic category, on at least one, important, way of construing that.

But, in a negative free logic, neither theorem entails that the name they contain refers, given an appropriate formulation of existential generalization, since these theorems are not simple sentences. As a result "although the free logical framework does not impair the logical powers of axioms for Russellian names, it does impair the logical powers of the relevant theorems" (Sainsbury 2005b: 67).

This is problematic, not because the truth theory does not allow us to derive the existence of Hesperus; it does in virtue of adopting axioms like (40). Rather the problem is that "we do not have the resources to generate a T-sentence which is true only if a name contained in it refers, so we cannot generate a T-sentence with a profile appropriate to a Russellian name" (Sainsbury 2005b: 69). That is, in a negative free logic, (42) will be true even if Hesperus does not exist. Moreover, from an utterance of 'Hesperus is visible in the evening' we cannot conclude that Hesperus exists even though 'Hesperus' is, by hypothesis, a Russellian name. As a result

> The existence assumption characteristic of a Russellian name does not surface in interpretation. If an utterance is interpreted as containing a name having wide scope, requiring it to have a bearer if the utterance is to be true, this does not reveal whether this is because the name is Russellian or because it is descriptive [or otherwise non-Russellian] but used with wide scope; if the latter is the case, the interpretation can be correct (and the T-theorem true) even if the name is empty. (Sainsbury 2005b: 70)

So, the negative free logic, which is required if we are to allow empty names, makes the role in interpretation of Russellian names indistinguishable from non-Russellian names, including descriptive names, with wide scope. So if we wish to use a T-theory as a theory of interpretation, Russellian names and non-Russellian names cannot be accommodated by the T-theory as stated.[22]

But this does not mean that we cannot accommodate both Russellian and non-Russellian names within a T-theory. First, we could abandon any interpretative aims, and simply treat a

[22] So here Sainsbury seems to be going back on Sainsbury (2006: 2 my emphasis) when he claims that the equivalence between (34) and (37) "ensures that a truth-theory with [(37)] instead of [(34)] will have just the same T-sentences, *and thus be indistinguishable from the point of view of the project of interpretation*".

T-theory as providing a semantics and serving as a theory of sense. Second, we can keep the interpretative role of T-theories but amend the T-theory so that it provides suitable T-sentences for Russellian names. And it is this that Sainsbury (2005b) does on behalf of those who want to allow for the possibility of empty names.

Appropriate T-sentences for Russellian names would be of the form

(44) [Hesperus] 'Hesperus is visible' is true iff Hesperus is visible

But if we want to end up with T-sentences for Russellian names of the form of (44), then we must be careful in interpreting the compositional axiom for simple sentences. Evans' formulation of this axiom is

(45) If S is an atomic sentence in which the n-place concept expression R is combined with n singular terms t1, . . . tn, then S is true iff <the referent of t1 . . . the referent of tn> satisfies R. (Evans 1982: 49; cf. 1979: 184)

If we are working with a univocal notion of reference, then (45) must hold for both Russellian and for non-Russellian names.[23] But since (45) is governed by a negative free logic, the scope of the definite description 'the referent of t1' makes a semantic difference to the interpretation of (45). The wide-scope version of (45)

(46) [the referent of *t*1] . . . [the referent of *tn*] If *S* is an atomic sentence in which the *n*-place concept expression *R* is combined with *n* singular terms *t*1, . . . then *S* is true iff <the referent of *t*1 . . . the referent of *tn*> satisfies *R*.

cannot be correct for empty names. So the definite descriptions in (45) must always take narrow scope.

Given our axiom for Russellian names, the composition axiom (45) ensures that we can derive the required T-sentences only if we have some further rule such as

[23] According to Evans, 'Julius' refers to its bearer, if any, 'in exactly the same sense as that in which a Russellian name refers to its bearer' (Evans 1982: 50).

(47) If '*s* is true iff *p*' is a theorem, then so is '[*n*1 . . .*n*k] *s* is true iff *p*', where *n*1 . . .*n*k are (the translations into the metalanguage of) names contained in '*s*' which are given widest scope in *their axioms*.

As Sainsbury notes, this rule

> ensures that only Russellian names allow interpreters to interpret on the pattern: [Hesperus] the speaker said that Hesperus was. . . ; or, more idiomatically: concerning Hesperus, the speaker said that it was . . . . Descriptive [and other non-Russellian] names would always take narrower scope than the T-sentential biconditional, and so would permit at most interpretations like: the speaker said that [Julius] Julius was . . . . (Sainsbury 2005b: 76).

So here we have a truth theory for a fragment of English that can do justice to Russellian names and also allows for empty names. This then seems to be a viable alternative to the no thought view.

But perhaps there is there is a parallel problem in the case of empty names. As we have seen our axioms for Russellian names allow existential generalization and so entail ∃x x=n. Our axioms for non-Russellian names, on the hand, do not allow for existential generalization, and so there is no corresponding entailment. So far, so good. But it is plausible, perhaps, that non-descriptive empty names are necessarily empty. But our axiom for empty names does not reflect this, since although existential generalization is not permitted, nothing in our truth theory entails ~∃x x=n. But if we required that our treatment of Russellian names entails that they have a referent, why should we not also require that our treatment of empty non-descriptive names entail that they lack a referent?

There is, however, an asymmetry between referring and empty names. Someone who knows that a name is empty can only go in for what Evans calls a 'conniving use' of the term. These uses have been set aside by Sainsbury since something special is going on in such cases, and so they require a special treatment. So an axiom for a non-conniving use of an empty name cannot entail that there is no referent, since knowledge of this fact would prevent one from

using the name in a non-conniving fashion. And obviously the axiom for an empty term cannot entail that there is a referent. So we want an axiom that neither entails a referent nor entails the absence of a referent, and that is what the axiom schema (37) gives us. When we go in for a non-conniving use of an empty term, we are not-knowingly not using a referring term, and (37) reflects this.

McDowell (2006) objects to Sainsbury's (2005a, 2006) uniform treatment of empty and non-empty names in a T-theory even once we prescind from the possibility of Russellian names in the following way

> [A] sentence containing "Neptune" is enabled, by its composition and the semantic properties of its parts, to express a thought that depends for its truth or falsity on how things stand with a certain object, the referent of the name it contains. It is true that the free logical framework allows us to say that the sentence containing "Vulcan" is enabled, by its composition and the semantic properties of its parts, to express a thought. But this supposed thought is not one that depends for its truth or falsity on how things stand with a certain object, the referent of the name it contains. There is no such object, and the thought that negative free logic allows us to say the sentence is fitted to express is simply determined as false by that fact, independently of the predicative material in the sentence that is supposed to express it. When we put things like this, the thought we are supposed to see as expressible by the sentence containing "Vulcan" seems to be of a strikingly different kind from the thought we can routinely see as expressible by the sentence containing "Neptune." (McDowell 2006: 16)

And McDowell is clearly correct. But what reason do we have to reflect this difference in a T-Theory? If McDowell is correct that Russellian and non-Russellian names form distinct semantic classes, then we can follow Sainsbury (2005b) as above and provide different treatments of these names in a T-Theory. But if all names form a uniform semantic class, then we need not amend Sainsbury's original approach. Sainsbury can accept McDowell's point above even if he thinks there are no Russellian names and adopt a uniform treatment of names in a T-Theory. As we noted above, thoughts containing empty names do not

correspond to a Russellian proposition. If he were so inclined, Sainsbury could appeal to this fact to show that there is all the difference in the world between Neptune thoughts and Vulcan thoughts. But note that on McDowell's own view there is all the difference in the world between referring to and thinking about Mars and referring to and thinking about Venus. But this fact does not need to be reflected in a T-Theory by different styles of axioms for each object. McDowell wants to group the referring cases together in one category and the non-referring cases in another. Sainsbury wishes to group them together. It is simply not clear whether the referential cases mark a more fundamental kind for semantics as McDowell would have it, or that purportedly referential terms are the fundamental semantic kind as Sainsbury contends. On the present approach we accept the similarities and also the differences, and remain neutral on the issue. If there are only Russellian names, we shall treat them à la McDowell, if there are no Russellian names, we shall treat them a la Sainsbury (2005a), and if there are both we shall treat them a la Sainsbury (2005b). A truth theory then, can account for the meaning of all names, whatever the possibilities.

But recognition of all this leads to a further complication. McDowell writes of Le Verrier's non-conniving use of 'Vulcan'

> If he said (a French equivalent of) "Vulcan is at least 1,000 miles in diameter," he surely meant to be expressing a thought that would be determined as true or false according to whether or not a certain object, the referent he took his name to have, was at least 1,000 miles in diameter. It would not have cohered with his conception of the risks he was running to say what Sainsbury would have us say, that even though he turned out to be wrong about the existence of a referent for the name, he was anyway expressing a thought, one determined as false just by the name's lack of a referent. The only possibility of falsity his thought-expressing intentions would have required him to envisage, for the thought he took himself to be expressing, was a possibility of its turning out, concerning the referent of the name he used, that it was not at least 1,000 miles in diameter. It is quite implausible that his intentions, in so far as they related to expressing a thought at all, whether a true one or a false one, were such as to be satisfied by his having turned out to have satisfied the condition for expressing a false thought that Sainsbury bases on the possibility of free logical truth-theory.

> Leverrier intended to be running the kind of risk of falsity that is a concomitant of aiming to speak the truth – not a risk of a kind of falsity that would belong with there never having been any chance of speaking the truth by uttering the words one utters (McDowell 2006: 17-18).

And it seems that, at least up to a point, Sainsbury agrees

> The essential role of a referring expression is given by the fact that, normally, in using it in a simple sentence a speaker represents himself as aiming to introduce an object (or objects—I will bracket the plural case) for the rest of the sentence to say something about. If a speaker is sincere, this means that in normal circumstances (not storytelling, negative existential sentences, etc.) she should believe that any referring expression she uses has a referent, and should intend that how things are with this object be what matters to truth, actual and counterfactual (and with respect to other times). A semantic theory should represent the meanings of expressions in line with the way speakers standardly and literally use them to represent how things are, and so should represent a (unary) simple sentence as requiring for its truth the introduction of a referent, and for the truth or falsity of the sentence, with respect to any possible situation, to turn on how things are with this referent. This is what is reflected by Evans's principle [(45)], and this is why referring expressions are modally rigid (Sainsbury 2005a: 81).

But we can agree with McDowell that Le Verrier took himself to be expressing an object-dependent thought, but note that he was wrong. McDowell must admit that Le Verrier was mistaken in this way, since there is no object-involving thought to be had in this case. So whatever Le Verrier thought he was up to, he was radically mistaken. McDowell's observation has no force against Sainsbury's uniform approach since both of them concede Le Verrier was mistaken. The difference is only that McDowell thinks that no thought was entertained, whereas Sainsbury thinks that no object-dependent thought was entertained.

McDowell mounts a distinct objection along similar lines. He notes that if we allow empty names to have a sense then

> we are envisaging a kind of sense that needs to be understood in terms of the idea of an expression's *purporting* to have a sense of the kind "Neptune" turned out to have and "Vulcan" turned out not to have. This is not the kind of sense Sainsbury's free logical approach credits to "Vulcan." (McDowell 2006: 18)

But it is simply not clear that this is correct. It is plausible that the axiom schema (37) is a cashing-out of the idea that 'n' purports to refer to n: it says that it refers to all and only the objects that are n, but does not, as it cannot, commit to there being an n. So McDowell has failed to show that Sainsbury's approach to empty names is inadequate.

4. Conclusion

We have argued that it does not follow from the acceptance of object-dependent senses that sentences containing empty names fail to express thoughts. But on the other hand it is not clear that sentences containing such names do express thoughts. It is admitted on all sides that what is going on in the empty case is radically different from what is going on in the non-empty case. Whether this robs empty names of the ability to contribute to thought-expressing sentences, we did not decide. If we do offer a treatment of empty names, then it is not clear whether we should treat them in the same semantic category as referring terms or treat them separately. But in either case, we have argued that there is an acceptable truth-theoretic approach.

As we have argued, both the classical logician and the free logician must restrict their quantifier rules as outlined above. And until we can settle whether empty names do contribute to thoughts, a negative free logic seems like the most neutral approach. Those who prefer the unrestricted rules do not lose anything since the two sets of quantifier rules are equivalent in classical logic. On the other hand, if we ought to give a treatment of sentences containing empty names, then we gain something if we restrict our quantifier rules as we avoid invalidities.

More generally we can see the disagreement between neutral free logicians, negative free logicians and classical logicians takes place against a background of agreement. All endorse The Existence Principle which we have here taken as a constraint on theorizing. Indeed, the

three logics cluster around three further choice points each accepting two claims whilst rejecting the third: classical and neutral free logic agree that sentences containing empty names are neither true nor false; classical and negative free logic agree that all thoughts are either true or false; neutral and negative free logic agree that simple sentences containing empty names express thoughts.

What all this shows is that all three logics agree on what to say about referring cases, and although they disagree on how to characterize the empty case, they agree that however it is characterized, the treatment of such cases is radically different from what goes on in the referring case. This is easily seen in the case of classical and neutral free logic, but is true even in a negative free logic, where simple sentences containing empty names are false simply in virtue of the fact that they contain an empty name, and are not sensitive to the predicative material.

So whichever logic we decide on, in one sense at least, not that much turns on our choice. In the next chapter we shall argue, however, that there is a reason for preferring a negative free logic, and this reason is still operative even if we want to single out singular negative existentials for special treatment, as Russellians have often done.

Chapter 2: Singular Negative Existentials

The problem of singular negative existentials can be illustrated by considering one reason for being sceptical of the idea of nonexistent objects:

> One of the reasons why there are doubts about the concept of a nonexistent object is this: *to be able to truly claim of an object that it doesn't exist, it seems that one has to presuppose that it exists*, *for doesn't a thing have to exist if we are to make a true claim about it?* Reicher 2010 (my emphasis).

So it seems as if true negative existential statements are impossible, since we need to presuppose the existence of an object, so that we can truly say of it that it does not exist. That is, an apparently true negative existential such as

(1) Vulcan does not exist

seems to be claiming of an object, Vulcan, that it does not exist. In particular, (1) appears to be a subject-predicate sentence, or what Sainsbury (2005a: 66n9) calls a simple sentence, a sentence consisting of an n-place predicate concatenated with n referring expressions. In (1), the singular term 'Vulcan' appears to pick out an object, and the rest of the sentence, '_ does not exist', appears to predicate a complex property, nonexistence (λx. x does not exist), of that object.[24]

But such a prime facie appealing semantic treatment of singular negative existentials is inconsistent with two other intuitively compelling claims, namely (i) that some such sentences are true, and (ii) that existence is prior to predication, the thought that is captured by

> The Existence Principle: For all t and for all F, Ft only if ∃x x=t

[24] Again we are not dealing with Sainsbury's (2005b 67n2) notion of a simple sentence which is framed in terms of non-complex predicates. As noted, to the extent that (1) looks like a subject-predicate sentence, it looks like it predicates a complex property of its subject.

The Existence Principle requires that any true subject-predicate sentence has a subject term which picks out an existent object. So by The Existence Principle, if true singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form, their subject term must pick out an existent object. But this requirement contradicts the claim that the singular negative existential appears to be making. So here we have an inconsistent triad: (i) existence is prior to predication, (ii) there are true singular negative existentials, and (iii) singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form. This is one version of the problem of negative existentials. But there is another, more general version of the problem.

Regardless of whether (1) is of subject-predicate form, it appears to use what appears to be a singular term, 'Vulcan'. In virtue of this fact, (1) seems to be making a claim about an object, namely Vulcan. But if the statement is to be true, then this object does not exist, and so the truth of (1) seems to commit us to Meinongianism, the view that some objects do not exist. This, more general version of the problem, seems to show that singular negative existential claims provide a straightforward counterexample to the Russellian view of names we considered in Chapter 1. That is, singular negative existentials present us with a further inconsistent triad: (i) everything exists (the denial of Meinongianism), (ii) there are true singular negative existentials, and (iii) any true negative existential (of the type we are concerned with, that is, involving non-descriptive names) would have to involve the use of a Russellian name. By (iii), a true singular negative existential requires an object to be picked out by the singular term; by (i) this object exists, but by (ii) this object does not exist.

So here we have two inconsistent triads which show that either we must admit nonexistent objects and deny The Existence Principle, or else deny that there are any true singular negative existentials, or else deny both that such statements are of subject-predicate form and that they use Russellian names. I shall argue for a particular version of the final response. But before doing so, let us set aside two responses to the problem.

The Meinongian approach to singular negative existentials is to say that such sentences are of subject-predicate form, and that such sentences may be true, and that when they are true, they are true in virtue of the singular term picking out a nonexistent object. In doing so, Meinongian approaches can maintain semantic appearances with respect to singular negative existentials, as they not only allow that singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form, but also that the singular term refers to an object which the rest of the sentence says

something about. So, *in that sense*, Meinongian approaches are perhaps the least revisionary accounts of singular negative existentials, although this is not to say that Meinongian theories are, as a whole, less semantically revisionary than non-Meinongian accounts. But the metaphysics of such accounts are independently problematic and Meinongianism violates The Existence Principle – the denial of Meinong's Independence Principle – which we have taken as a constraint in our thinking about singular thought. So Meinongian accounts are to be rejected.

Also to be rejected are non-Meinongian accounts which reject The Existence Principle. Such approaches agree with the Meinongian that singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form, and that such sentences are true, but deny that the truth of these sentences involve reference to an object, and so reject the Russellian view of names. Insofar as they avoid the problematic metaphysics of Meinongianism, such accounts are to be preferred. But such accounts employ a positive free logic, which, as we saw in Chapter 1, leads to problematic unwanted identities. And as has just been noted, such views deny that existence is prior to predication. We have already argued (Chapter 1) that if we are to employ a free logic, we should favour a negative free logic.

So, in different ways, Meinongians and positive free logicians reject The Existence Principle. Meinongians reject it by saying that there are nonexistent objects. Positive free logicians say that there are no nonexistent objects, but that genuinely empty terms can feature in true subject-predicate sentences. Neither view is countenanced here as we are taking The Existence Principle as a constraint. If only an approach to singular negative existentials which denied The Existence Principle were tenable, then we would have to reconsider our stance, but as I shall argue below, no such expedient is required.

So, we are left with the following options (i) maintain that singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form, but deny that there are any true negative existentials, (ii) deny that singular negative existentials are simple sentences, accept that all names are Russellian, but deny that negative existentials involves the use of Russellian names, or (iii) deny that singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form and that all names are Russellian. This final option is the strategy to be advocated here, but first let us look at what can be said in favour of the first two options.

1. Russellian Approaches

The first remaining approach to singular negative existentials is to deny their truth. Such a proposal lacks appeal, although we might be led to it, by theoretical considerations.[25] In particular, one might deny the truth of singular negative existential statements if one were convinced that there are no non-Russellian names. If there are no non-Russellian names, then any sentence purporting to express a true singular negative existential statement of the type we are interested in will either (i) use a name which refers, and so will be false, or (ii) will use a mock name which fails to refer, and hence the sentence will fail to express a proposition, and so will not be true, or (iii) will neither use a name or a mock name. The Russellian then must either deny that there are any true singular negative existentials, or else deny that such sentences use what appear to be names.

So the Russellian must either explain why we take singular negative existentials to be true, when they are not, or else provide some account of the truth conditions of singular negative existentials that does not involve the use of a (mock) name.

There are two broad strategies that Russellians have adopted, either as an account of the truth conditions of singular negative existentials, or as explanations of why we take some singular negative existentials to be true when they are not, and when, moreover, they fail to express any proposition whatsoever. These ways correspond to the two ways in which the Russellian can deny that singular negative existentials involve the use of a (mock) name: they can either claim that singular negative existentials do not involve a (mock) name or else they can admit that they do, but that the name is not *used*. In closing, we shall consider a third Russellian strategy, one that addresses head-on the incompatibility of Russellianism and the truth of sentences involving the use of empty names.

[25] We shall consider another reason in Chapter 6, namely that we are realists about the putative non-existents.

1.1 Descriptivism

First, the Russellian may claim that what appear to be names are in fact disguised definite descriptions. The Russellian may think that all ordinary proper names are in fact disguised descriptions, or else he may think that it is only in the context of (negative) existential statements that names are really descriptions. Our Russellian about names allows, contra Strawson (1950), that definite descriptions which lack a denotation may nevertheless contribute to the expression of thoughts which are true or false.[26]

For Russell, a sentence containing a definite descriptions such as 'the first woman on the moon was Pakistani' has the following truth conditions:

(2) $\exists x\, Wx \,\&\, \forall y\, Wy \supset x=y \,\&\, Bx$.

The falsity of (2) is shown by the truth of its wide scope negation not the negation of its final conjunct. Similarly, where a name 'n' is an abbreviation of the definite description 'the F', the truth conditions of 'n does not exist' are given by

(3) $\sim\exists x\, Fx \,\&\, \forall y\, Fy \supset x=y \,\&\, Ex$.[27]

In terms of truth conditional adequacy, we can drop the last clause, given our non-Meinongianism, and if, like Russell himself, we think that 'exists' is a second-level concept, then 'exists' is not to be represented by the predicate letter 'E'.

Descriptivism, at least in its qualitative forms, is rejected without argument here, for broadly Kripkean reasons (Kripke 1980).[28] Those same reasons tell against admitting that singular negative existentials fail to express a proposition, but that the feeling of falsity is given by the falsity of the associated proposition employing the relevant qualitative definite description. In any case, we should note that employing descriptivism just in the case of existential statements seems like an ad hoc manoeuvre by the Russellian to save their claim about proper

[26] This is not commitment of Russellianism per se, but it is the position of, for example, Russell (1905), Evans (1982: Chapter2), and Wiggins (1995).

[27] Given that (3) is consistent with the existence of a non-unique F, presumably uniqueness will have to be built in to the predicate itself for (3) to capture what we are after when we use a singular negative existential.

[28] Non-qualitative forms of descriptivism won't help the pure Russellian, since they shall depend, for him, on employing terms with object dependent senses, and so the problem reappears elsewhere.

names. This appearance can be mitigated, somewhat, by the realization that there is something special about singular negative existentials, at least for the Russellian, but nevertheless, this isolated descriptivism is not independently motivated.[29]

1.2 The Metalinguistic Approach

The second pure Russellian response admits that singular negative existentials involve mock names, but that these names are mentioned rather than used.[30] As noted above the Meinongian is, in some ways, semantically conservative. But that such accounts are perhaps not as faithful to our semantic intuitions as they might at first appear, even in the case of singular negative existentials, can be seen by noticing that we ordinarily think that there is a tight connection between singular negative existentials and failures of reference. As Evans notes, in singular negative existential statements "empty singular terms are apparently used to register the fact that they are empty" (1982: 343). This then suggests that the Russellian employ a metalinguistic treatment of (true) singular negative existentials.

Donnellan (1974) advocates one such metalinguistic approach:

> When the historical explanation of the use of a name (with the intention to refer) ends in this way with events that preclude any referent being identified, I will call it a "block" in the history (Donnellan 1974: 23).
>
> If N is a proper name that has been used in predicative statements with the intention to refer to some individual, then 'N does not exist' is true if and only if the history of those uses ends in a block (Donnellan 1974: 25)

[29] A similar approach takes existential statements to be claiming that a certain concept is instantiated and singular negative existentials as denying this instantiation claim. But if the concept is purely qualitative, then this approach has the defects of qualitative descriptivism. The best version of this approach utilises individual concepts, but again, for the Russellian, if a name is meaningless, so will be the corresponding individual concept expression and so the pure Russellian cannot avail himself of this strategy to account for true singular negative existentials. We discuss this approach, in a broadly Russellian setting when considering Wiggins' approach to singular negative existentials below.

[30] An alternative Russellian strategy is sketched by Kripke (1974). As we shall see when we discuss Evans' account of singular negative existentials, either Kripke's account does not use a singular term, and so is subject to the criticisms levied at Donnellan's account, or does use a singular term and so is unsatisfactory for the reasons Evans gives and which should by now be apparent.

Perhaps, suitably cleaned-up, Donnellan's proposal does provide extensionally correct truth conditions for singular negative existential statement, but nonetheless this account is not satisfactory.

As Evans points out, in singular negative existential statements, just as in cases of successful reference, there is a big difference between grasping what is said by a negative existential statement and understanding the metalinguistic truth conditions:

> I take it to be obvious that in [the case of singular negative existentials] the singular term is used (albeit connivingly) and is not merely mentioned. That is to say that no less of a gap exists in these cases, between grasping any proposition about the term (as uttered on that occasion) and grasping what is said, than in the case of a normal use of a singular term. This means that we cannot contemplate the kind of metalinguistic analyses of singular existential statements which have been so popular among those who subscribe to the Russellian status of singular terms. ... If a speaker says something like 'That woman does not (really) exist', in the context of a shared perceptual illusion, a remembered film, or a story, he surely cannot simply be represented as saying something like 'This use of the demonstrative "That woman" does not refer'; no one who merely grasped that could be said to have understood what the speaker said. Understanding these uses of singular terms requires something of the same general kind as is required to understand ordinary information-invoking uses of singular terms (Evans 1982: 344)

I agree with Evans (1982: 344-345, 349), Kripke (1974) and Dummett (1983: 297) that a metalinguistic solution to the problem of negative existentials is implausible.

Now Donnellan explicitly says that his truth conditions are not to be thought of as an *analysis* of singular negative existentials, so that he is not claiming that what we grasp when we grasp a singular negative existential is the metalinguistic truth condition. So it might be thought that Evans' objection is unfair to Donnellan. But noticing this does not help Donnellan avoid the force of Evans' objection and does, in fact, mean that Donnellan's account is even more worrisome.

Despite not offering an analysis in metalinguistic terms, Donnellan (1974: 27) admits that on his account a name has a different function in singular negative existential statement than it does in an ordinary predicative statement, and by this, I take it, he means it is mentioned and not used.[31]

Further, by not providing an analysis, Donnellan admits that he is not saying what negative existential statements mean or what proposition they express (1974: 25). But the suspicion is that there is no Russellian proposition or no proposition involving an object-dependent sense that it could be unless it involved the word 'a' or the sense of the word 'a'. So by not providing an analysis, Donnellan makes it completely mysterious what proposition could be expressed by a singular negative existential statement. And elsewhere he takes this to undermine the claim that empty names can be used to express propositions:

> But a true negative existence statement expressed by using a name involves a name with no referent and the corresponding positive existence statement, if false, will also. But in other contexts, when a name is used and there is a failure of reference, then no proposition has been expressed-certainly no true proposition. If a child says, "Santa Claus will come tonight," he cannot have spoken the truth, although, for various reasons, I think it better to say that he has not even expressed a proposition.
>
> Given that this is a statement about reality and that proper names have no descriptive content, then how are we to represent the proposition expressed? (Donnellan 1974: 20-21 and 21 n15).

So we should follow Evans in rejecting metalinguistic accounts of singular negative existential statements.

[31] One might think that we could refute Donnellan here by appeal to a sentence with a single occurrence of a name which had an ordinary predicative element and a negative existential element. But as we shall see in Chapter 5, singular terms can be both mentioned and used simultaneously.

1.3 Doing without Truth

Given the failure of these two strategies, then, we must, in the absence of any other explanation for why we take singular negative existentials to be false when they express no thought, abandon Russellianism about proper names in its full generality. Russellians claim that no proposition is expressed by someone using a mock name, or what we ordinarily call an empty name. So sentences such as 'Vulcan is a planet' are neither true nor false. But the Russellian is not, and should not be, committed to the claim that utterances of 'Vulcan is a planet' are unintelligible. As McDowell puts it

> Of course when we say that Le Verrier falsely took "Vulcan" to have a sense of a referent-dependent kind, we are not saying that non-conniving uses of "Vulcan" by Le Verrier and his interlocutors were blankly unintelligible – as if they were on a par with gibberish. It is perfectly clear what was going on in such talk. In seriously uttering sentences such as (a French equivalent of) "Vulcan is at least 1,000 miles in diameter," Le Verrier was *making as if* to be using a name with a sense of the kind "Neptune" in fact turned out to have. His performances, moreover, had just the sort of background in astronomical facts, and plausible hypotheses about how to account for them, that his uses of the name "Neptune" had before the hypothesis about the perturbations of Uranus was confirmed – apart from the fact that in the case of "Vulcan" the corresponding hypothesis, about the perturbations of Mercury, was going to be disconfirmed (McDowell 2006: 18).

Now if the Russellian cannot give the same type of account for singular negative existentials, then there is pressure on him to recognize the truth of them, given that they cannot be explained away as above. Now it is clear that someone who uses an empty name to *sincerely* utter a singular negative existential cannot *simply* be making as if to be using a name with an object dependent sense, since, if he is sincere, he will not think the name has an object-dependent sense. But what he can do is initially make as if to be using a name with an object-dependent sense, and then to reveal that the term lacks such a sense and lacks a referent. Indeed, this is akin to what Wiggins (1995) claims is going on in utterances of singular negative existentials, even though Wiggins himself thinks that there are true singular negative existentials. But here we can see that the Russellian can explain what is going on without

invoking either truth or a Russellian proposition. So it is not clear, working within a Russellian perspective, what is generating the pressure for the Russellian to accept the truth of singular negative existentials. The (pure) Russellian cannot state how the world is by using a singular negative existential, but this does not prevent him showing how the world is.

Nevertheless, we all have the strong impression that some singular negative existentials are true and so, we are committed to the minimal claim there are empty names that can contribute to the expression of thoughts in the context of negative existentials. The extent to which we must abandon Russellianism is, however, not settled by this observation. Perhaps empty names can only contribute to the expression of (negative) existential thoughts; perhaps non-Russellian names can be used only in certain contexts; perhaps, all names which do in fact refer, are Russellian, and form a distinct semantic class from any non-Russellian names. These questions are, at this stage, left open, so we can still distinguish between non-Russellian and broadly Russellian accounts in what follows.

2. Abandoning Full-Blown Russellianism

As we have seen, accepting both The Existence Principle, and the apparent truism that there are true singular negative existentials, requires us to deny that singular negative existentials are of subject-predicate form. Although, singular negative existentials appear to predicate a complex property, (λx. x does not exist), of an object, there is the possibility that what they are doing instead is denying a predicative claim. That is, rather than 'not' being a predicate modifier in such sentences, taking the predicate 'exists' and forming a new predicate 'does not exist', 'not' is a sentential operator. So instead of the logical form of singular negative existentials being given by

(4) (λx. x does not exist) <a>

they are instead given by

(5) ~[(λx. x exists) <a>]

with negation taking wide scope over the sentence 'a exists'.

More generally, we can parse many complex sentences of the form ‘a is OF’ in two ways. First we can treat ‘O’ as a predicate modifier, so that the logical form is given by

(6) $(\lambda x.\ OFx)\ \langle a \rangle$

where ‘OF’ is a complex predicate. Or we can treat ‘O’ as a sentential operator so that the logical form is given by

(7) $O[(\lambda x.\ Fx)\ \langle a \rangle]$

These syntactic variations are, in many cases, semantically equivalent in the sense that necessarily one is true iff the other is. But when we are dealing with questions of empty names and nonexistence, we must take care which form we choose. Given The Existence Principle, when a does not exist, we cannot formulate a true claim in the style of (6), but only in the style of (7). Moreover, if we accept (something like) a negative free logic, then claims of the form of (7) are often true.

Nor are such questions of form only semantically relevant to questions of existence. As Forbes puts it

> In first-order logic, logical connectives are restricted to connecting sentences (open or closed). But in natural language, they can connect expressions of various categories. Thus, in ‘Tom sleeps and snores’, ‘and’ appears to connect two intransitive verbs. One option is to deny appearances and treat ‘Tom sleeps and snores’ as the result of some kind of transformation of ‘Tom sleeps and Tom snores’, but it is not easy to state this transformation in general form (try replacing ‘Tom’ with ‘some cat’). An alternative is to include in [our language] not merely the connective ‘and’ [which is a function from truth values to a function from truth values to truths values, that is of

type <t,<t,t>>], but an 'and' for each case where we want to allow direct non-sentential conjunction. (Forbes 2006: 27-28).[32]

That is, although (8) and (9) are equivalent, (10) and (11) are not:

(8) (λx.sleeps and snores) <Tom>

(9) (λx.sleeps) <Tom> and (λx.snores) <Tom>

(10) (λF. ∃x Cat (x) and F(x)) <λx.sleeps and snores>

(11) [(λF. ∃x Cat (x) and F(x)) <λx.sleeps>] and [(λG.∃x Cat (x) and G(x)) <λx.snores>]

Nor need the phenomenon be limited to predicates. If we want to distinguish the collective and distributive readings of 'Tom and Jerry got married', then one obvious way to go, is to distinguish between 'and' the sentential connective and 'and' which forms a complex, plural referring term from two names.

So the approach to singular negative existentials to be explored and recommended here does not require the ad hoc postulation of a distinction, but rather reflects the syntactic complexities of natural languages that often, but not always, leave no semantic trace. Moreover, given that such ambiguities are often semantically irrelevant and, as Forbes (2006: 27) says, 'systematic', it is not surprising that we fail to distinguish the available readings, thinking that true singular negative existentials are of the form of (6) rather than the form of (7) (also see note 32 above, and Chapter 5). So the approach here is also plausible as well as motivated by independent syntactic and semantic considerations.

We also noted above that The Existence Principle and the admission that there are true singular negative existentials involving names entails that the names in such sentences are not Russellian, if used. And on the approach sketched above, the names are indeed used, and so cannot be Russellian. That is, since we are taking for granted that 'exists' is a predicate true of everything,[33] these approaches must allow for the intelligibility of empty names. Such

[32] Forbes (2006: 28) continues "... Effectively, then, we regard the English 'and' as systematically ambiguous, shifting its type according to its context of utterance". This is, in effect, the response to those such as Wiggins (1999) who claim that since 'exists' is a second-level predicate in 'cows exist' it must also be a second-level predicate in 'Neptune exists'.

[33] Or the second-level equivalent.

accounts cohere with a non-Russellian view of names such as those advocated by Burge and Sainsbury. But such an approach can also be taken by those who allow that as well as Russellian names, there are also non-Russellian names. These latter approaches can maintain the Russellian paradigm as an ideal by allowing that such non-Russellian names imitate Russellian names and can only be used to express thoughts in special contexts. Moreover, although as I shall argue such approaches must abandon classical logic in order to account for the truth of singular negative existentials, *such considerations alone* do not force them to endorse a negative free logic. Nevertheless, I shall argue that any plausible account of singular negative existentials must both deny Russellianism in its full generality and embrace a negative free logic.

2.1 Non-Russellianism

Given that non-Russellians allow for meaningful empty names, the non-Russellian can allow that sentences containing empty names, including negative existentials such as

(1) Vulcan does not exist

are meaningful. Moreover, if our non-Russellianism is combined with a negative free logic, as recommended in Chapter 1, then the treatment of negative existentials is relatively unproblematic. Sainsbury claims that a negative free logic

> Offers a dazzlingly straightforward account of how there can be negative existential truths. Like any simple sentence with a non-referring expression, 'Vulcan exists' is false. What is said by 'Vulcan does not exist' is the denial of this falsehood, and so is true. This account is much more simple and straightforward than any rival, and I am not aware of any serious problems with it. (Sainsbury 2005a: 195)

Given his three assumptions, Sainsbury's claim can be substantiated. That is, if 'Vulcan' is an empty name, and 'exists' is a first level predicate, then

(12) Vulcan exists

is a simple sentence, which, given our Ockhamist truth conditions, is false. So if (1) is the negation of (12), so that we might more perspicuously represent it as

(13) ~[(λx. exists x) <Vulcan>]

then, (12) is true, which is the result Sainsbury claimed, and the one that we want to secure.

On the other hand, if the 'not' in (12) is not sentential negation, but rather a predicate modifier, so that (12) is more perspicuously represented as

(14) (λx. does not exist x) <Vulcan>

then, as a simple, albeit one with a complex predicate, sentence with an empty name, (12) is false given our negative free logic, which is not the result we were looking for. So this account of singular negative existentials is at least committed to there being a reading of (12) where 'not' plays the role of a sentential operator.

Note that this issue, as will be apparent, is not restricted to questions about existence. If we want to say that there is a true reading of 'Sherlock Holmes is not (really) a detective', or 'it is not the case that Sherlock Holmes is (really) a detective', where 'Sherlock Holmes' is an empty name, then 'not' has to be sentential negation. If 'not' is here construed as a predicate modifier, so that what we have is a simple sentence, then this is automatically false in a negative free logic.[34]

Sainsbury couches his account in terms of a first order existence predicate, but this is not essential to a negative free logical account of singular negative existentials. If, instead, we treat 'exists' as a second-level predicate, so that (1) is not a simple sentence, but rather has the form

(15) (λF.∃x Fx) <λy. y=Vulcan>

[34] I am not (yet) committing to there being such a true reading. But here we are, for the moment, assuming that some names are non-Russellian, so that empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts.

Then we can still provide a straightforward account of the truth of (12), since it will be formalized as either

(16) $\sim[(\lambda F.\ \exists x\ Fx)\ \langle\lambda y.\ y=\text{Vulcan}\rangle]$

which says that it is not the case that the concept being Vulcan is instantiated, or

(17) $(\lambda F.\sim\exists x\ Fx)\ \langle\lambda y.\ y=\text{Vulcan}\rangle$

which says that the concept being Vulcan is uninstantiated. If there is such a concept, then (16) and (17) are equivalent, although (16), but not (17) is consistent with their being no such concept.

As (15) is not a simple sentence containing an empty name, a negative free logic does not entail its falsity in virtue of its form, and so does not entail the truth of (16) and (17) in virtue of their form. However, given the equivalence of (15) and $\lambda y.\ (\exists x\ x=y)\ \langle\text{Vulcan}\rangle$, the latter being a simple sentence with a non-referring singular term, a negative free logic is committed to the falsity of (15) and thereby the truth of (16), although not in virtue of its form. Moreover, the Ockhamist truth conditions which a negative free logic accepts for simple sentences can be generalized so as to ensure the falsity of (15)

> Generalized Ockhamist Truth Conditions: if ‘a’ is an argument of level n and ‘F’ is a function of level n+1, then ‘Fa’ is true if F maps a to the true and false otherwise.

With this generalization in hand, which is to be motivated in the same way as a negative free logic, we secure the falsity of (15) and thereby the truth of (16). And on the assumption that there is the concept of being identical to Vulcan, the falsity of (15) ensures the truth of (17) given that the second-level concepts of instantiation and uninstantiation effect a partition on first level concepts.

But again, just as in the case where we take ‘exists’ to be a first level predicate, the negative free logician is committed to their being a reading of (1) where negation does not take narrow scope; either negation has to take wide scope, as in (16), or intermediate scope, as in (17).

This is not, however, because the narrow scope reading of negation produces a falsehood, since, like (16) and (17),

(18) $\lambda F.\exists x\ Fx\ \langle\lambda y.\ y \neq \text{Vulcan}\rangle$

is true: the concept being non-identical to Vulcan is instantiated, assuming that there is such a concept. But unlike (16) and (17), sentences like (18) do not plausibly provide the correct truth conditions for negative existentials in general, as they give the incorrect verdict in the case of non-empty names. That is, whereas $\lambda F.\exists x\ Fx\ \langle\lambda y.\ y \neq \text{Sainsbury}\rangle$ is true 'Sainsbury does not exist' is false.

So regardless of whether we take 'exists' to be a first or second-level predicate, a negative free logic can straightforwardly account for singular negative existentials if the 'not' in such a statement is not construed as having narrow scope.

But is it plausible that negation in singular negative existentials does not take narrow scope? Note that there is no issue here for the second-level view, as giving negation narrow scope on such a view is a not even prima facie plausible. When we say that Vulcan does not exist, we are not thereby saying that something which is not Vulcan does exist. So the second-level view of exists, embedded within a negative free logic provides a straightforward account of the truth of singular negative existentials, modulo any worries about the second-level treatment of 'exists' itself.

On the first level view of 'exists', however, there is a challenge, since, as we noted at the outset, singular negative existentials do appear to be of subject-predicate form, an appearance denied by the second-level approach. As has already been stressed, singular negative existentials cannot have subject-predicate form on modest assumptions, namely, (i) that some singular negative existentials are true, and (ii) The Existence Principle, and so we must give up this pre-theoretic semantic intuition about singular negative existentials. In any case, it is easy to see, I think, that denying that singular negative existentials are subject-predicate sentences is not so costly.

We can motivate the idea that ‘not’ often takes wide scope independently of the issue of empty names. Consider the true sentence

(19) Neil Armstrong might not have been born.

This sentence has to be treated as

(20) ◊~[(λx. x is born) <Neil Armstrong>]

and not as

(21) ~◊[(λx. x is born) <Neil Armstrong>]

which is false, nor as

(22) ◊[(λx. x is not born) <Neil Armstrong>]

which, presumably, is false, but is in any case not the intended interpretation of our target sentence. So here we have a sentence, (19), in many ways similar to (1), where ‘not’ has to take wide scope relative to the predicate.

It might be replied that, of course if we are treating the modality in question as a sentential operator, (19) has to be read as (20), but this ignores the possibility that ‘might’ is to be treated as a predicate modifier, giving the unobjectionable formalization

(23) (λx. x might not have been born) <Neil Armstrong>

Alternatively, one might accept the reading of (19) as (20), but deny that (1) is analogous. Both these objections can be addressed by making the point not with the explicitly modal sentence (19), but with the non-modal sentence

(24) Neil Armstrong was not born.

(24) is false. Nevertheless, it could have been true, that is

(25) (24) could have been true.

In (25) there is no question whether the possibility modal is a sentential operator. But if so, (24) must be read as

(26) ~[λx. x is born <Neil Armstrong>]

rather than as

(27) [λx. x is not born <Neil Armstrong>].

So here we see that when we consider questions of modality, we are forced to recognize a wide scope reading of 'not' in sentences such as (24).[35]

As the above discussion has shown, the kind of scope distinction that we have marked above with the lambda operator is present in English. That is, some sentences of English employ negation as a sentential operator, whereas others employ it a as a predicate modifier. Sainsbury (2005a: 197) thinks that ordinarily 'non-' is a predicate modifier whereas, 'not' is a sentential operator. If so, then singular negative existentials such as (1) are straightforwardly true as illustrated above. There does not appear to be a false reading of (1), and so, there appears to be no ambiguity. That is, (1) seems to uniquely express (13), there being no reading of (1) along the lines of (14).

Sainsbury, however, (2005a 197-198) thinks that a hard-and-fast rule cannot be maintained with regards to 'not' and 'non-'. Consider the following pair of sentences

(28) Vulcan is not more than 1000 miles across
(29) Vulcan has a diameter of no more than 1000 miles.

[35] By focusing on a non-modal sentence to make a modal point, this strategy is similar to Kripke's (1980) reply to Dummett (1981 appendix to Chapter 5). By invoking modality to provide motivation about a view concerning empty names, the argument is similar to the Wiggins' inspired considerations in favour of rejecting classical quantification theory.

Taken as the negation of a simple sentence, (28) is true given a negative free logic. But, Sainsbury thinks, we ought to accord the same truth value to both (28) and (29), and so given that (29) is false, (28) must be false also. But this means that the 'not' in (28) cannot be construed as a sentential operator in a negative free logic. Hence, Sainsbury concludes that 'not' sometimes functions as a predicate modifier.

Sainsbury notes that one might resist this conclusion by noting that since Vulcan does not exist, it is not anything, it is not more than 1000 miles across, not less than 1000 miles across, not exactly 1000 miles across. But he resists this line of thinking based on a hypothetical exchange of the following type:

> Lescarbault: Vulcan is about 900 miles in diameter, but in any case, is not more than 1000 miles in diameter.
> Le Verrier: I think it nearer 925 miles across, but I agree that Vulcan is not more than 1000 miles across.
>
> Here we have to regard this utterance [of 'Vulcan is not more than 1000 miles across'] as false. We parse it not as negation but as an affirmation, equivalent to the claim that Vulcan is exactly or less than 1000 miles across. (Sainsbury 2005a: 198).

But consider the following pair:

(30) 2 is not more than six feet tall
(31) 2 has a height of no more than six feet

These two sentences parallel Sainsbury's (28) and (29) in syntactical form, although '2' refers whereas 'Vulcan' does not. But do we have to regard (30) and (31) as having the same truth value? Intuitively, (30) is true whereas (31) is not, since 2 is not any height whatsoever, and so this would seem to count against Sainsbury's claim that 'not' is ambiguous in English. This does not settle the matter, however, since 2 satisfies the complex predicate λx. is not more than six feet tall, whereas Vulcan does not satisfy any complex predicate. Nevertheless,

this example shows that we need not assign the same truth value to pairs such as (28) and (29).

But what about the hypothetical exchange between Lescarbault and Le Verrier? Here it is true that Le Verrier wants to affirm something because he thinks that Vulcan exists. The question is, whether his utterance succeeds in affirming something? If what a speaker intends to say and what he says can come apart, as surely they can, we cannot read off the content of Le Verrier's utterance from his intentions. To explore this topic, however, would take us too far afield. But minimally, we can conclude that Sainsbury has not made the case that 'not' is ambiguous in English. If this is correct, then this is even better news for his treatment of negative existentials and more broadly a negative free logic, although it seems that not much turns on this. Regardless of the precise treatment of 'not' and 'non' in English, the non-Russellian like Sainsbury has a simple, effective and compelling treatment of singular negative existentials.

2.2 Russellianism

As is clear by now, if Russellians are to admit the truth of some singular negative existentials, then they must treat the names in such sentences differently from referring terms, and so must abandon Russellianism as a thesis about names in general. It is consistent with this fact, however, that referring terms are Russellian. As Evans puts it

> The challenge posed by [true singular negative existentials] to the thesis that normal information-invoking uses of singular terms are Russellian is not direct, for it is clear that such cases are abnormal. (Evans 1982: 343).

The admission of non-Russellian names, only threatens the Russellian status of referring names, if we have the additional premise that all names belong to a single semantic category as Sainsbury would have it. But Russellians like McDowell (2006), who now flirt with the idea of according senses to empty names, deny this. So true singular negative existentials do not require us to abandon all Russellian instincts we may have, but does require us to accept that empty names can be used to express thoughts with a classical truth value, at least in the case of true singular negative existentials.

Moreover, the concession that the Russellian must make in the face of seemingly true singular negative existentials is consistent with the claim that such contexts are odd, and are the only contexts in which empty names can be used to express thoughts. So, more than a modicum of Russellianism can be maintained in spite of singular negative existentials.

The Russellian could, if he were happy to do so, simply embrace the negative free logical apparatus and adopt the Burge/Sainsbury treatment of singular negative existentials. This would mean that in addition to admitting true singular negative existentials, they would have to admit the truth of the negation of other simple sentences involving empty names. This is, in effect, what Braun (1993) does, although with the unhelpful and unclear addition of a gappy Russellian proposition.

But some Russellians have not been happy to go this way as they want to make their concession about the thought expressing powers of empty names only in the case of singular (negative) existentials. That is, they want to highlight a contrast between what is happening in the case of singular negative existentials and other sentences containing empty names. For these Russellians are happy to say in general that sentences containing empty names fail to express propositions. But they think it is more costly to take the same route in the case of singular negative existentials. As we saw above, the Russellian has a story to tell about what is going on in the case of utterances involving empty names, which makes intelligible such behaviour, and we argued such an account could be extended to singular negative existentials. But for these Russellians, in the absence of Vulcan, 'Vulcan is a planet' fails to communicate any specific information, which corresponds to the lack of a suitable Russellian proposition. There is, however, the strong impression that singular negative existentials do communicate a specific piece of information. Negative free logicians treat false singular existentials and simple sentences with nonreferring terms on a par, whereas, some Russellians want to resist this.

The second reason that some Russellians are not happy to simply follow Burge and Sainsbury in their treatment of negative existentials is that they want to highlight a particular aspect of true singular negative existentials which is not present in other cases of sentences with empty singular terms, namely a shift from the world of fiction or supposition to a reality-invoking mode.

As Donnellan puts it:

> Discourse about actuality carries the presupposition that the speaker is talking about people, places, or things that occur in the history of our world. A puzzle arises when the speaker is unfortunate enough to use a singular expression, intending to attribute a property to something, but fails, in his use of that expression, to refer to anything. ... For example, someone might well have said, "Jacob Horn wrote about Augusta Town and now we know where it was located." It would have been some sort of inconsistency-exactly what kind is another question-for such a speaker then to affirm the nonexistence of Jacob Horn. This contrasts with discourse about fiction – there one can, for example, consistently deny the existence of Snow White while also stating that she enraptured a prince (Donnellan 1974: 6).

For Donnellan, it seems that (some) discourse about fiction does not carry this presupposition of existence, and so we can make the negative existential claim in good conscience. But, as Donnellan notes, the negative existential claim itself is not a claim about fiction:

> The denial of Snow White's existence, it should be noted, is in discourse about actuality, while the statement that she enraptured a prince is in discourse about fiction. (If the question of existence arose in discourse about fiction alone, Snow White existed, whereas Hamlet's father's ghost, again presuming we are talking about fiction, probably did not.) (Donnellan 1974: 6 n9).[36]

But neither is it simply a statement about actuality, since such utterance carries an existential presupposition, and the Russellian utterances containing empty names made in reality-invoking mode express no thought. Rather, someone who sincerely utters a singular negative existential should be

[36] Donnellan (1974: 5) thinks that sentences such as 'Snow White enraptured a Prince' can express true thoughts, but this is not essential to the type of Russellianism under discussion.

> seen as standing with one foot in the fiction, where the singular term leads a simulacrum of a normal life, and one foot in the real world, from which perspective the term can be used to state the fact which makes its behaviour abnormal (Sainsbury 1999: 259; cf. Wiggins 1995).

So for these two connected reasons, then, our Russellian does not simply wish to follow Burge and Sainsbury's treatment of empty names, whilst holding onto the claim that referring terms form a distinct semantic category. The question is, can the Russellian secure this amount of Russellianism? I shall argue that whilst the Russellian can privilege singular negative existentials, he has not shown that he can treat them as being true without also allowing the negations of simple sentences containing nonreferring terms to be true.

2.2.1 Evans

Gareth Evans' treatment of singular negative existentials is one attempt to spell out the thought implicit in Donnellan that singular negative existentials are in part comments on or within the scope of a fiction or pretence, and in part in reality-invoking mode. Evans focuses on the case of singular negative existentials involving names from fiction, although no doubt his account could be extended to include other cases of apparently true singular negative existentials (see the discussion of Wiggins below for an illustration of how such an extension might go).

For Evans, when we talk about fiction we engage in a pretence. For him, true negative existentials express a move in the pretence which reveals that it is a pretence. For Evans, someone who utters a true singular negative existential

> is not like someone who tries to prevent a theatre audience from being too carried away by jumping on the stage and saying: 'Look, the men are only actors, and there is no scaffold or buildings here – there are only props.' Rather, he is like someone who jumps up on the stage and says: 'Look, Suzanne and the thief over there are only characters in a play, and this scaffold and these buildings are just props.' The audience must be engaged in the make-believe, in order to understand what he is saying (Evans 1982: 369).

When using the name ‘Godzilla’, within the scope of a fiction, we pretend that ‘Godzilla’ names a monster. A sentence used within a fiction containing ‘Godzilla’, such as

(32) Godzilla is more terrifying than King Kong

does not, for a Russellian like Evans, express a proposition since it contains an empty name. However, Evans thinks that (32) can be used to make-believedly express a proposition and that when employed within a fiction we have quasi-understanding, although this is not a species of understanding. How then does Evans account for the truth of singular negative existential statements containing empty names? Evans analyzes such sentences as of the form

(33) Not (Really (Godzilla exists))

The operator ‘Really’ is supposed to allow for ‘Godzilla exists’ to have a serious use outside the scope of a fiction. As Evans says

> ‘Really’ is a word which, when prefixed to a sentence, produces a sentence such that an utterance of it is true (absolutely) [that is, not merely according to a fiction] if and only if the sentence preceded by ‘really’ is itself such that there is a proposition expressed by it when it is uttered in the relevant game of make-believe, and this proposition is true (absolutely) (Evans 1982: 370).

So Evans’ idea is that when we precede ‘Godzilla exists’ by ‘Really’ we have a sentence which expresses a false proposition. Its negation, (33), is then true.

It is clear that the essence of Evans’ account is not tied to the first-level view of ‘exists’ which he favours. Evans could have equally as well have offered the following treatment of singular negative existentials

(34) ~ Really ($\exists$x x[=a])

or to spell it out in the lambda calculus

(35) ~ Really (λF. ($\exists$x Fx) <λy.y=a>)

Sainsbury (1999) argues that 'really' performs no such function in English. Rather, Sainsbury thinks that 'really' has no effect on the truth conditions of a sentence, so that

(36) 'Really p' is true iff 'p' is true

It is agreed on all sides that 'really' is factive, so that the left-to-right direction of (36) holds. So the truth of (36) turns on whether there are counterexamples to the right-to-left direction of (36). Evans (1982: 372) seems to think that 'really' does have a truth-conditional effect which he illustrates with the following pair

(37) Had this man's parents not met, this man would not have existed
(38) Had this man's parents not met, this man would not have really existed.

Whereas (37) sounds fine, (38) is infelicitous. But why should we think that infelicity here is an indication of falsity?

> [I]t is not clear that inserting 'really' produces any change of truth value, as opposed to some oddity. The interpreter of the 'really' version looks for pretence or speculation or false view to the effect that this man would have existed under the supposed circumstances, and finding none feels dissatisfied; but it would be hard to *dissent* from the conditional supplemented with 'really' (Sainsbury 1999: 262-263).

For Sainsbury, the function of 'really' in English is to highlight a contrast between reality and mere appearance, including, but not only fiction. Sainsbury's claim is supported by the following examples

(39) The author was quoted as saying that he feared a fiend but what he really said was that he feared a friend.

(40) The service is currently exploited by a wide range of applicants, but should be confined to those really in need.

Further, as Sainsbury notes, removing 'really' from these examples does not seem to affect their truth conditions. But even if we concede that the infelicity in Evans' example tracks falsity, this does not show what Evans wants it to show, at least not by his own lights. As Sainsbury points out, Evans accepts that sentences with the same truth conditions can embed differently in modal contexts. That is, employing Dummett's (1991 appendix to Chapter 5) terminology for the distinction, ingredient sense does not supervene on assertoric content (see Stanley 1997 §7 for some discussion).

In the light of this, Evans' proposal is best seen as employing 'really' in some technical manner, rather than as employing it in its everyday sense. But there is a decisive problem for Evans.

> Yet it remains to be explained how quasi-understanding can be an input to genuine understanding: we cannot know what it would be for 'p' to be really true in the most common case, that in which there is no such thing as what it is for 'p' to be true (absolutely) (Sainsbury 1999: 262).

To put things in terms of thoughts, rather than understanding, if the fact that 'n' is empty robs the sentence 'n exists' of the ability to express a thought, why does it not rob the ability of 'Really n exists' to express a thought? As Dummett says of an example of Evans' "that little green man" is an information-linked term, so that, if it has no reference, no sentence containing it can express a proposition" (1983: 305). Similarly, if 'S' does not express a thought, how can any embedding of 'S', where 'S' is used and not mentioned?

Evans himself commits to both of these principles when chastising Frege

> Now it is true that anyone who holds that a given singular term, 'b', is Russellian must, like Frege, regard such Free-Logical manoeuvrings as quite out of place; he too will subscribe to the principle that Frege here upholds, namely that if S has no truth value, no embedding of S can be true. But the

> Russellian has something to defend his use of this principle. In his case, 'failing to have a truth value' amounts to 'failing to express any thought at all', *and since no complex sentence can express a thought if a constituent sentence (used not mentioned) fails to do so, it follows that no embedding of a sentence without a truth-value, even within the scope of 'Neg', can be true, failing as it does to express a thought* (Evans 1982: 24-25 my emphasis).

So '~Really S' can only express a thought given Evans' Russellianism about non-descriptive names, if 'S' expresses a thought. But given that for Evans, the relevant cases of 'S' do not express thoughts, although they may be used in a make believe to make-believedly express thoughts, then '~Really S' cannot, in the relevant cases express a thought either, and so, cannot be true. So, the fact that makes singular negative existentials problematic for Evans in the first place prevents his account, however initially promising it might have been, from working. That Evans' view is inadequate is simply a consequence of the fact that no Russellian name can be used in a true negative existential given The Existence Principle.

Does the Evans-inspired second-level approach fare any better than Evans' own first-level approach? This turns on whether, for Evans, '$\exists$x x[=a]' expresses a proposition. If it does, and it expresses a proposition that is false, then all well-and-good. If it fails to express a proposition, then this approach fails in the face of Dummett's objection above. (If it expresses a proposition which is true, then the account is not extensionally adequate, but this possibility shall not concern us).

Now given that 'a' is an empty non-descriptive name, '$\exists$x x[=a]', fails to express a proposition since '=a' will lack a sense due to the lack of sense of one of its components, namely, 'a'. Similarly, $\exists$x x[=a] iff $\exists$x x=[a], and the latter cannot be true on a Russellian account when 'a' is empty. So although Evans' account is not tied to a first-level account of existence, switching to a second-level view dos not avoid the problems with his account, and so Evans' proposal is to be rejected.

As Dummett notes

> It is, however, impossible to see why the condition for "Really (E(g)" to express a proposition should be what Evans takes it to be unless that sentence is being used to say something about a particular use of the sentence "E(g)" (Dummett 1983: 305).

That is, Evans wants 'Really S' to be false even when 'S' expresses no proposition, but according to the principles above, this can only be the case if 'S' is mentioned. As has been stressed already, if empty names have no sense, then they cannot be *used* in order to express true singular negative existential thoughts. This is why the only hope for Evans' account is as a metalinguistic treatment of negative existentials. But, following Evans himself, we have rejected such accounts here.

It is odd that Evans did not see this objection.[37] To see this, compare what Evans says about the very similar Russellian account of singular negative existentials offered by Saul Kripke (1974). Kripke says that a true-sounding negative existential 'a does not exist' can be seen as saying that there is no true proposition that says of a that it exists. Kripke's analysis is, however, like Evans', a non-starter for the Russellian since, as Evans (1982: 350) notes, if the fact that 'a' is empty robs 'a does not exist' of its ability to express a proposition, which is what the Russellian claims, then this fact also robs Kripke's analysans of its ability to express a proposition if the singular term is used and not mentioned.

2.2.2 Wiggins

Although Evans' account fails, it remains insightful. First, as the quote from Evans (1982: 369) above shows, Evans thought that singular negative existentials were moves within a pretence that exposed it as a pretence, and that such moves required being party to the pretence. Second, although he did not have time to spell out the idea properly, Evans thought that such exposure requires a game-to-reality shift, with 'Really' being the device that signals and/or effects that shift. But both of these ideas are independent of Evans' own, flawed, implementation.

[37] *The Varieties of Reference* was published posthumously from a set of notes and draft chapters that Evans left. As Sainsbury (1999: 259) notes, Evans' remarks about 'Really' come at "the end of a hastily concluded chapter, which would no doubt have been elaborated considerably had Evans lived".

David Wiggins (1995, 1999, 2003) offers a broadly Russellian account of singular negative existentials which takes these insights of Evans', but embeds them within an account that does not fall foul of the principles of embedding empty terms appealed to above.

Wiggins' account differs from Evans' in a number of respects. First, Wiggins remains committed to classical logic, unlike Evans, who given his acceptance of empty descriptive names, embraced a negative free logic. Second, Wiggins frames his account in terms of a second-level treatment of exists. Third, to avoid the problems that beset Evans' approach, Wiggins allows that, in certain circumstances, empty names can have a sense, and that we don't merely quasi-understand (certain) utterances containing empty names, but we do genuinely understand them. So Wiggins' account is not a pure Russellian one. Fourth, as we shall see, all this means that Wiggins gives the name in question wide scope over the Really operator. Finally, Wiggins concentrates the explication of his account on supposition rather than fictions, presumably just to show how Evans' insights can be applied to other cases of negative existentials.

Starting with the last point, Wiggins, taking his lead from Evans, explains what happens when we utter a singular negative existential such as 'Vulcan does not exist':

> We make ourselves party to Le Verrier's thoughts and hypothesis. In becoming party to those thoughts, and speculating about how it's as if things are with Uranus and its neighbours in the solar system – and then in participating in Le Verrier's later speculations about how it's as if things are with Mercury and its neighbours – we are drawn into having thoughts of our own that make reference to the very same subject matter that Le Verrier had in mind (Wiggins 1995: 105).

And it is by Le Verrier refining his speculations that a sense is secured for 'Vulcan', and by going along with Le Verrier we can grasp its sense:

> At the beginning of such a prolepsis, it will not be clear what 'Vulcan' is to stand for; but then, at some point in Le Verrier's hypothesizing—at some point in his inventing his story, one might say, for this is the analogy we are depending upon—we shall understand him well enough,

> and he will understand himself well enough, to know what he means by saying that it is presence of Vulcan that explains the behaviour of Mercury. For when this point is reached, a sense is secured for "Vulcan" (Wiggins 2003: 489).

And what is true for speculation is true in the case of fiction too

> Gradually such a story constructs a narrative space in which we can answer the question "who is Nausikaa, what is she?". Just as the story mimics reality, so the name "Nausikaa" mimics an ordinary proper name. ... This is to say the name behaves as if it named a young woman and, in this way, the name secures a sense for itself (Wiggins 2003: 490-491).

It is in virtue of this sense that we can, on Wiggins' account, understand, genuinely understand, what Le Verrier is saying:

> Evans thinks that when we go along with Le Verrier we're in the state of as if understanding which objects these are. He says noting stronger than that. But surely it's not merely as if we understand how Le Verrier says things are. Rather we understand, we actually do understand, how Le Verrier says it's as if things are, both in the Neptune case and in the Vulcan case (Wiggins 1995: 107)

Now that Wiggins, unlike Evans, has a sense for Vulcan and genuine understanding, he can provide an account of true singular negative existentials. Once a sense has been secured for the name 'Vulcan', this determines, not a referent, for Vulcan does not exist, but the associated concept, the concept of being identical to Vulcan, $\lambda x.\ x=\text{Vulcan}$. Once this concept has been secured we can employ it in a second-level account of singular negative existentials to say that this concept is not instantiated.

But since, for Wiggins, names presuppose that they name something, even within presupposition or fiction, we cannot simply use an empty name in a singular negative existential, at least in the case of fictional names:

> Each genuine semantically satisfactory name comes with a putative claim for existential generalization [EG]. Since fictional names present themselves as genuine names, for these too it is always as if EG is validated. For suppositional names, while the supposition is alive, there is non-fictional but probationary status. Before and after the death of a supposition, we treat such names as 'Vulcan' and their claim upon EG with great caution. (Wiggins 1999: 286 n11).

So we have to employ ‘really’ to invoke what Evans called ‘the game-to-reality shift’. As Wiggins puts it

> What ‘really’ marks is the transition – within one sentence – from one sort of thinking and talking, the speculative mode, to the other sort, a reality-invoking mode. What the true singular negative existential will force us to recognize is that we need both these modes, and that we need the means to negotiate transitions – even transitions within one sentence – from the one mode to the other (Wiggins 1995: 106).

As Wiggins (1995: 108) says, we find ourselves with one foot in Le Verrier’s speculation and with the other foot in the real world.

> The account that emerges of saying ‘Vulcan doesn’t really exist’ ... is then as follows. To say this, we have to rehearse the hypothesis yet again (or tell the story yet again) but, this time, in the course of the rehearsing (or the telling) and the further developing or amplifying, we must make a comment. We must say that the hypothesis fails, or say the story is only a story. But we do this *in the course of the rehearsing (or telling) it* (Wiggins 1995: 109).

The final account then of the singular negative existential is, for Wiggins, as follows

> 'As regards that planet, the planet which (it's as if) affects the perihelion of Mercury, and as regards its concept, c, well, really nothing at all answers to c, c is not really instantiated' (Wiggins 2005: 108).

So a well-developed hypothesis or fiction, allows us to specify a concept and then say that this concept is not really instantiated.

So here we have a neo-Russellian account of singular negative existentials which is putatively both adequate and distinct from non-Russellian accounts such as Sainsbury's. Two questions still remain, however. First, Wiggins' (1995) initial account of his view was presented as part of a rehabilitation of the second-level view of 'exists', but is this style of treatment of singular negative existentials essentially tied to a second-order view of 'exists'?[38] Second, can the Russellian follow Wiggins in allowing empty names to be used in true singular negative existentials, without allowing their occurrence elsewhere in thought-expressing sentences? Let us address these questions in order.

Presumably a Wiggins inspired first-order account of singular negative existentials will take something like the following form

(41) As regards Vulcan, it does not really exist

Now if such a proposal is not to fall to Dummett's objection to Evans, then 'Vulcan exists' must express a proposition, so that both 'Really (Vulcan exists)' and '~Really (Vulcan exists)' can express propositions. In order for this to be the case, 'Vulcan', when employed in uttering a singular negative existential, must have a sense. And it must have a sense, even though it is bearerless. This requirement is something that the Russellian usually rallies against, so as a Russellian, we might expect Wiggins to deny that 'Vulcan', in such uses, has a sense. But there are good reasons to think that this is not a consistent position, for there are good reasons to suppose that 'λx. x=Vulcan' has a sense iff 'Vulcan' has a sense.[39]

[38] Wiggins nowhere states that his style of account is tied to the second-level view of 'exists', but neither does he say that it can be adapted to a first-order treatment of 'exists'.
[39] For our purposes we only need the left-to-right direction of this equivalence.

First, if the concept of being Vulcan which Wiggins employs in his account of singular negative existentials, 'λx. x=Vulcan', has a sense, we might expect that we can show its sense, even if we cannot state it. And following the approach outlined in Chapter 1, we might expect we could do this with the relevant axiom in a truth theory. Such an axiom might look like

(42) ∀x x falls under the concept being identical to Vulcan [λy. y=Vulcan] iff x = Vulcan [λz.z=Vulcan <x>]

Now if this axiom is to be understood, the right-hand side of it must be understood, and hence 'Vulcan' must have a sense. But we should be wary of relying on this consideration, for Wiggins has not committed to the claim that the sense of every concept can be shown in a truth theory or indeed that it can be shown at all. Moreover, since this axiom will be adequate only if it is true, and its truth in classical logic supports the false ∃x x=Vulcan, its adoption requires a (negative) free logic. Now although we have argued that a negative free logic is the appropriate neutral background logic, Wiggins has been at pains to distance himself from it, although whether he can really do so we shall question below.

But we need not settle such controversial matters here. Rather we can rely on the general Fregean claim that an expression has a sense only if all its semantically significant parts have a sense (Dummett 1993: 290). This principle, combined with the claim that the concept expression 'identical with Vulcan' has 'Vulcan' as a semantically significant part, ensures that 'Vulcan' has a sense. Although perhaps not incontestable, the Fregean principle is compelling, and there appear not to be any counterexamples. Moreover, it is something like this principle that underlies Dummett's objection to Evans, and Evans' objection to Kripke, so in the context of establishing whether there is a first-order Russellian account of singular negative existentials, the principle does not have to be granted, since if it is not, Dummett's objection to Evans fails, and we have our first-order Russellian account after all.

In any case, Wiggins is explicit that 'Vulcan' does have a sense, and it is this that allows us to grasp the concept λy. y=Vulcan which he needs for his account of singular negative existentials. So 'Vulcan' has a sense, and so one barrier to the first-order account of singular

negative existentials is lifted. There are, however, two more potential problems that need to be addressed, before we can be confident that the proposed first-order account is acceptable.

Whilst we have reason to think that Vulcan has a sense if 'λy. y=Vulcan' has a sense, what has not been established is that 'Vulcan' has a sense that can be used to express true singular negative existential thoughts. Of course, if 'Vulcan' has a sense, then it would be appear that the onus is on anyone who wanted to deny that 'Vulcan' could be used as a singular term to express true negative existential thoughts to show why this was the case.

Now if 'Vulcan' has a sense which is not fully determinate it may not be able to combine with the other words in a singular existential statement to express a thought. So the possibility remains that Wiggins can grant, as he must, that 'Vulcan' has a sense, but deny that this sense is such that it can contribute to first-order negative existential thoughts.

We might object to this rejection of a Russellian first-level account of singular negative existentials on the grounds that if 'Vulcan' lacks a determinate sense, how can 'λy. y=Vulcan' possess a determinate sense? We know, however, that two indeterminate terms can be disjoined to make a determinate term. Take any vague predicate and its complementary vague predicate and disjoin then to form a determinate predicate. Whilst it might not be clear whether Timothy Williamson is thin or whether he is not thin, it is clear that he is thin or not thin.[40] But here we can see how the indeterminacies lead to determinacy, and the case is very different to the one required by the opponent of the first-order approach suggested here, but nevertheless it demonstrates that indeterminacy is not necessarily inherited by a whole from its parts.

Nevertheless, the objection based on indeterminacy of sense, is not plausible given the transparent and tight connection between 'Vulcan exists' and 'λy. y=Vulcan is instantiated'. That is, λx.∃y=x <Vulcan> stands or falls with λF. ∃y Fy <λx. x=Vulcan>. Indeed both can be seen as ways of decomposing ∃y y=Vulcan. We have been given no reason to suppose that whilst 'λy. y=Vulcan' has the kind of sense suitable for inclusion in thoughts of the kind expressed by singular negative existentials, 'Vulcan' does not have such a sense. So I conclude that this line of thought fails to undermine the first-level Russellian view of singular

[40] Of course, it is clear that Williamson is thin, but never mind.

negative existentials we are considering. We have seen no reason then, that someone who accepts Wiggins' views about names cannot employ a first-level existence predicate.

A more fundamental question is whether Wiggins can allow an empty name to do work in expressing singular existential thoughts without allowing them to feature in sentences expressing other thoughts. It would seem that there is nothing to prevent this possibility, and Wiggins himself accepts it:

> If I say 'Father Christmas doesn't really bring presents' then (1) I do as if to narrate the legend of Father Christmas (a jolly old man from the north with a long white beard who brings presents to children on the night before Christmas etc.), doing this either explicitly or else (where every-one knows the story) inexplicitly by simply using the name: and then (2) I comment, within the same speech episode but directing it now towards reality, that Father Christmas doesn't really bring presents. If I say 'Father Christmas brings (does not bring) presents' I need not be saying anything true or false. Well or badly, I am just recounting or applying the legend. But if I say that, as regards Father Christmas, he really brings (does not bring) presents, then the 'really' lifts the thought to a level at which it demands to be evaluated as true or false. The reference of the name is secured sufficiently for these purposes by the fact that it's as if 'Father Christmas' stands for Father Christmas who.... (Wiggins 1999: 282).

So empty names, it seems, can be used to express thoughts, as long as they occur within the Really operator. This shows that Wiggins is committed to the view that empty names can be used to express thoughts in simple sentences, and so can have no qualms with someone employing a first-order existence predicate (bracketing his general worries about such a predicate), within his Really operator. If the worry about the determinacy of sense undermined the ability of 'Father Christmas' to feature in singular negative existential claims, construed as negations of simple sentences, then we would be at a loss to explain why this same indeterminacy does not rob 'Father Christmas' of its ability to feature in sentences expressing thoughts about present giving.

But what about occurrences of empty names outside of the 'really' operator? The really operator marks a shift from game to reality, so if we do not have such a shift, we do not need to employ the operator. There are two cases to consider.

First, what is to prevent Le Verrier's speculations from expressing thoughts, even if he is in an as if mode, rather than full reality-invoking mode as Wiggins suggests? All the terms he used have a sense, or at least they will have once he developed his theory sufficiently. And these terms are arranged in a grammatical fashion characteristic of the way in which words with senses are arranged to express thoughts. So how do they fail to express thoughts? It cannot be that 'Vulcan' lacks a bearer, for we have seen that Wiggins allows for there to be thoughts expressed using 'Vulcan'. The only explanation can be that as well as signalling a shift in our mode of speech, the 'really' operator also imbues otherwise senseless terms with sense. But this cannot be, if Wiggins is not to fall prey to the Dummett objection to Evans. So we have no explanation of why sentences outside the scope of a 'really' operator cannot express thoughts.

Of course, we may use such sentences outside the scope of a really operator and yet not say anything true or false, for we may use them in ways other than assertion. If I am engaging with a fiction I need not be asserting anything but may be engaging in a game of make-believe, and to that extent need not be saying anything true or false. This accounts for Wiggins' remark above. Nevertheless, the words I use may have a content, such that if they were used to make an assertion they would express a thought.

Second, what happens if someone were to happen upon a work of fiction and mistake it for biography, sincerely uttering in a reality-invoking way 'Sherlock Holmes was a great detective'. Such a claim would not be true, and given that we have argued that such a sentence has a sense, it seems there is nothing to prevent it from being false. Similar remarks could be made for Le Verrier's notebooks. So if fiction and supposition imbue empty terms with senses good enough for Wiggins' purposes, it seems that these names are available to be used to express thoughts, regardless of the speaker's awareness of the fiction or supposition. Of course, without engaging in the relevant fiction or supposition, the speaker cannot fully understand what he is saying, but why should this be a barrier to saying something true or false?

But once we have the occurrence of empty names expressing thoughts in reality-invoking mode, but not embedded within a 'really' operator, we cannot hold on to classical existential generalization. That is, if 'Sherlock Holmes was a great detective' expresses a proposition, as we have argued it does, even when there is no game-to-reality shift, we cannot validly conclude that ∃x x=Sherlock Holmes. So once we admit the truth of singular negative existentials, it seems that a negative free logic follows, and that the neglected alternative mentioned in Chapter 1 is not viable.

2.2.3 Whither Russellianism?

What is left of Russellianism on such a view? In the face of apparently true singular negative existentials, it has been conceded that empty names can have a sense, and thereby can be used to express thoughts, which are true or false. But once the case of singular negative existentials has been conceded, much more follows, namely that empty names can be used to express other thoughts. Our neo-Russellian then, concedes that there are names that function as Burge and Sainsbury say they do *only* in the sense that the do not guarantee a referent and do not have an object-dependent sense (although they may have a sense that guarantees them to be empty). Neo-Russellianism then comes down to the claim that empty names and non-empty names do not form a uniform explanatorily important kind. Rather there are the class of non-empty names and the class of empty names which mimic the non-empty names, but which are incapable of figuring in the kinds of thoughts in which non-empty names do. This is what is left of Russellianism once it is admitted that there are true singular negative existentials. All that the Russellian and the non-Russellian such as Sainsbury disagree upon is whether empty names and non-empty names should be group together or separately. Or so it seems, if we are to accept the truth of singular negative existentials.

We have seen that both neo-Russellians such as Wiggins, and non-Russellians, such as Sainsbury, have adequate accounts of singular negative existentials either using a first or second-level existence predicate. The above considerations, then, do not upset our presupposition in favour of a first-level account of *singular* existential statements.

There is, however, a consideration which may favour the second-level treatment of existence, one which will appeal particularly to Russellians, but perhaps not only to them. As we have

seen, Russellians have been driven to abandon a large part of their position by trying to account for the truth of singular negative existentials. The ideal position for the Russellian, which I have argued is not to be had, is to allow for the truth of singular negative existentials, whilst denying that other sentences containing empty names express thoughts. The non-Russellian, on the other hand, treats all sentences containing empty names alike.

Now although I have argued that the ideal Russellian position is unavailable, the neo-Russellian can maintain a disanalogy between singular negative existentials and other uses of empty names by employing a second-level approach to existence. Only on a second-level approach is there a Russellian proposition corresponding to a true singular negative existential, a proposition composed of the relevant singular concept, the higher-order concept of instantiation, and negation. But other sentences containing empty names, unless these are also given a second-level treatment, cannot correspond to a Russellian proposition. The Russellian then, can say that whilst other sentences containing empty names express propositions, they are unlike the proposition expressed by singular negative existentials.

3. Conclusion

We have argued here that there is a relatively simple treatment to be had of singular negative existentials iff we admit that empty names have a sense. We further argued that once we admit this, this opens up the door to empty names figuring in other sentences which express propositions, against the Russellian spirit. This means that we are forced to adopt a negative free logic, if we accept that there are true singular negative existentials, as there appear to be.

As a result the dispute between neo-Russellians and non-Russellians comes down to whether or not empty names and non-empty names form a unified semantic category. Nevertheless, neo-Russellians (and non-Russellians) can maintain the distinction between singular negative existentials and other sentences containing empty names if they embrace a second-level view of existence. In any case, we also noted that just as Russellians can explain away the intuition that other sentences containing empty names express thoughts, they can likewise explain away the intuition that singular negative existentials are true.

In the remainder, however, we shall assume that there are true singular negative existentials and therefore that we require a negative free logic. The remainder of the thesis is concerned

with the complication that arises from the case of fiction, since although fictional names are paradigmatically empty names, and fictional negative existential statements are paradigmatically true, we shall argue that there are fictional characters.

Chapter 3: Fictional Names and Fictional Characters

In Chapters 1 and 2 we argued that there is a coherent, plausible account of empty names whatever attitude we take to non-empty names, and that our treatment of empty names allows for a relatively simple treatment of singular negative existentials. Moreover, we argued that once we allowed for true singular negative existentials, we had to allow empty names to contribute to the expression of thoughts in other contexts too.

In the rest of the thesis we shall focus on one type of putative empty name, fictional names, and in particular, on one type of putative nonexistent, namely fictional characters. In this chapter we argue for what we think should be the default view of fictional names and fictional characters. This is the view that fictional characters exist and are the creations of authors, in much the same way that fictions are, but that these artefacts are only sometimes the referents of fictional names: broadly speaking fictional names when used outside the scope of a fiction refer to fictional characters, whereas uses of fictional names within the scope of a fiction are empty.

In the following three chapters I consider three influential objections to the default view. First, in Chapter 4, I consider metaphysical objections to the realist element of the default view. Then, in Chapter 5, I consider an objection to the claim that fictional names are ambiguous. Finally, in Chapter 6, I consider an ontological/semantic objection to the realism defended here and in Chapter 4, namely that negative existentials involving fictional names are true, and hence there can be no fictional characters. I argue that, although these objections have some intuitive force, under further scrutiny, they all fail.[41]

1. Claims with Fictional Names

Fictional *names* occur in a number of different contexts, which are illustrated by the sentences below:

Claims within the scope of a single fiction

[41] In Chapter 6, I also argue that if we are to be realists, we should endorse the ambiguity thesis, thus providing further support for the default view.

James Bond was married to Vesper Lynd

Darth Vader is an Ewok

Transfictional Claims

Hercule Poirot is more conceited than Jane Marple

Gandalf is more powerful than Harry Potter

Intentional Claims

I admire Sherlock Holmes

My niece is searching for Dracula

Metafictional Claims

Captain Nemo was Jules Verne's finest creation

Sam Spade is not a well-developed character

Metaphysical and Existential Claims

Mr Tumnus is a fictional character

Cruella de Vil is not real

Godzilla does not exist

There are fictional characters, for example, Godzilla.[42]

How should we account for the (in)felicity of these sentences? Does a successful answer to this question require the postulation of fictional characters, which are the referents of the proper names in the sentences above? Realists about fictional characters, such as Lewis (1978), Salmon (1998) Thomasson (1999), and van Inwagen (1977), and irrealists about fictional characters, such as Everett (2005, 2007), Sainsbury (2009), and Walton (1990) disagree over this question.

[42] I do not claim that these categories are exhaustive or mutually exclusive. For example, consider the claim 'Blofeld is my favourite James Bond villain'. This is both an intentional claim and it would seem a transfictional claim too. I discuss some examples of mixed sentences in Chapter 5.

Prima facie, different types of claim involving fictional names seem to pull us opposite directions. To see this, let us focus on claims within the scope of a fiction and metafictional claims. Metafictional claims seem like good candidates for literal truth and often strike us as literally true. For example, 'Charles Dickens created Martin Chuzzlewit' seems straightforwardly and literally true. A simple and plausible semantic treatment of this statement treats the two singular terms as referring to objects, Charles Dickens and Martin Chuzzlewit respectively. Similarly, 'Sam Spade is not a well-developed character' also seems to be making a claim about the world which turns on how things are with the fictional character Sam Spade; again 'Mr Tumnus is a fictional character' appears to be a straightforwardly true subject predicate-sentence, with 'Mr Tumnus' playing a referential role, just as 'Mr Cameron' does in 'Mr Cameron is Prime Minister'.

Similarly, realism about fictional characters is supported by sentences which seem to explicitly quantify over fictional characters. For example, 'some fictional characters are based on real people, whereas others are not' appears to quantify over fictional characters. So, metafictional discourse seems to commit us to realism about fictional characters, with fictional names in such contexts referring to fictional characters.[43]

The claims above are similar to claims which seem to commit us to fictions themselves: *The Red-Headed League* is a Sherlock Holmes story; Iain Banks is the author of *The Wasp Factory*; *Northanger Abbey* is not itself a Gothic novel; there are many works of fiction written by women; The *Illuminatus Trilogy* is a shaggy dog story; *Fahrenheit 451* is fiction, but too close to the truth for comfort. Here we have existential, metaphysical, and metafictional claims about works of fiction, including creation claims, which seem to commit us to the existence of fictions conceived of as creations of authors.[44] But given the parallel between these statements about fictions and the statements about fictional characters above, it

[43] Van Inwagen (2000) argues that the realist has a further advantage, namely that he can account for the apparent entailments which seems to hold between sentences which appear to quantify over fictional characters. For example, the following argument seems valid: there is a fictional character who, for every novel, either appears in that novel or is a model for a character who does, so, if no character appears in every novel, then some character is modelled on another character. Van Inwagen thinks that the irrealist is at a loss to explain this entailment, since there is no obvious *paraphrase* strategy that saves the entailment. But this assumes that the best irrealist treatment is to employ paraphrase. On a pretence theoretic treatment, however, such sentences reflect our pretending to quantify over fictional characters and there is no reason why classical logic cannot be operative within the scope of the pretence. See below for more discussion of pretence theory.

[44] The Oxford English Dictionary defines the noun 'author' as "The person who originates or gives existence to anything".

is natural to treat them on a par, taking the statements about fictional characters as committing us to their existence too.

Irrealists often recognize the force of these considerations, only embracing irrealism because of apparent difficulties with realism. For example, before going on to argue that the metaphysics of fictional characters is incoherent, Everett (2005: 624) says that such sentences "appear to be literally and straightforwardly true. And it seems, prime facie, that we should take their syntax at face value" so that they entail the existence of fictional characters. Similarly, Sainsbury (2009: 99) notes that it is an attractive feature of some forms of realism that they can construe authors "as literally bringing something new into existence" when they create fictional characters.

So we have good reason think that it is part of our ordinary way of thinking that there are fictional characters. Let us capture this minimal claim about our ordinary thinking with the following:

> Realism: fictional characters exist.[45]

Notice that Realism makes only an ontological claim; it tells us nothing about the metaphysics of fictional characters nor about the semantics of fictional names. Realism per se leaves it open, for example, whether fictional names ever refer to fictional characters. But the types of sentences that we have already considered do reveal part of our ordinary thinking about the metaphysics of fictional characters and about the semantics of fictional names. In particular, the natural picture that we build and that is conceded by irrealists as being prima facie attractive, is that we conceive of fictional characters as being literally created, where being created entails being brought into existence. That is, we seem to be committed to

> Creationism: fictional characters are created, they do not exist eternally, rather they are man-made artefacts which are brought into existence.

Creationism about fictional characters simply reflects a more widespread creationist instinct that we have about artworks:

[45] Like the claims that follow, this claim is to taken at face value and read as being literally true, where I hope we have some idea of what this means.

> [The creativity claim] is one of the most firmly entrenched of our beliefs concerning art. There is probably no idea more central to thought about art than that it is an activity in which participants create things — these things being artworks. . . . The notion that artists truly add to the world . . . is surely a deep rooted idea that merits preservation if at all possible. (Levinson 1980: 8)

But we are not simply committed to Creationism. Rather, it is part of our natural way of thinking that authors create fictional characters just as they create fictions:

> Authorial Creationism: fictional characters are created, they do not exist eternally, rather they are man-made artefacts which are brought into existence by authors.

These three theses are listed in order of increasing strength. That is, Authorial Creationism entails, but is not entailed by, Creationism, and Creationism entails, but is not entailed by, Realism. All three are part, I think, of our ordinary picture of fictional characters.

In addition to these ontological and metaphysical commitments, the considerations above also show that we have semantic commitments. Not only do we think that fictional characters exist, we think that they are the referents of fictional names in at least some metafictional and metaphysical contexts

> Reference: For any fictional name, n, there are potential uses of n which refer to a fictional character.

So here we have a cluster of commitments extracted from consideration of some sentences containing fictional names. But not all sentences containing fictional names pull us in this realist and referential direction. For example, claims made within the scope of a single fiction or transfictional claims seem to be naturally treated as empty names:

(1) Sherlock Holmes has a brother called ‘Mycroft’

(1) is better than

(2) Sherlock Holmes has a brother called 'James'

since the Conan Doyle stories describe events in which someone called ' Sherlock Holmes' has a brother called 'Mycroft' and do not describe him as having a brother called 'James'. But we do not, I think, want to say that (1) is literally true. We do not think that (1) is true in the same way that 'Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes' is. And irrealists concede this. More generally, as Kripke (1973) notes, (generally) statements containing fictional names, which ascribe non-literary, and non-intentional predicates, such as (1) and (2) count as good or correct iff they are true according to some appropriate story, in this case the Sherlock Holmes stories of Conan Doyle. Indeed, we might want to treat these statements, insofar as we think that they are literally true, as having an implicit qualifier in them, so that when spelt out (1) becomes

(3) According to the Conan-Doyle stories, Sherlock Holmes had a brother called 'Mycroft'.[46]

On the other hand, insofar as we do not think that (1) is literally true, we think it apt in some game of make-believe that we participate in which is licensed by the appropriate fiction (Walton 1990). As Everett puts it

> It is plausible that utterances of object-fictional sentences do not involve us actually asserting anything but rather involve our merely pretending to make assertions or at least our making assertions which describe the content of a pretense rather than the nature of the real world (Everett 2005: 625).

On either reading of sentences such as (1) it does not appear that we are committed to the singular terms in such sentences as referring to anything. Insofar as we take such sentences as true, they are akin to sentence such as

(4) According to Christians, a supernatural being watches over us

[46] See the discussion of Burge in Chapter 1.

which, regardless of our stance towards theism, does not in itself commit us to the existence of a supernatural being.

Similarly, when we treat sentences such as (1) within the scope of a make-believe they are not ontologically committing. Sentences such a (1) no more commit us to the existence of Holmes than does a child's game where lumps of mud are treated as pies, commit us to the existence of pies.

But what goes for claims made within a single fiction also seems to go for transfictional sentences too such as

(5) Poirot is more arrogant than Holmes.

That is, we do not think (5) is literally true, but if true at all is licensed by claims in the relevant fictions.

So far all we have is that some sentences containing fictional names seem to commit us to the existence of fictional characters whereas others do not. But often, the realist at this point impressed by his success in offering a parallel treatment of fictions and fictional characters and of construing metafictional claims as literally true, seeks to extend his approach to other claims involving fictional names. Just as metafictional claims have singular terms which refer to abstract fictional characters, so do claims within the scope of fictions. So although these latter types of sentences do not commit us to fictional characters in virtue of their form, some realists say that fictional names within such sentences nevertheless refer to fictional characters.

It is not an objection to this realist view that we do not think that sentences like (1) and (5) are literally true. The realist can, and should, concede that that no fictional character really has a brother. So the felicity of such statements is not taken to consist in their literal truth. Rather the realist helps himself to the notions above: (1) is literally true only when prefixed by an intensional operator and/or is felicitous as a stand-alone sentence because it true in some appropriate game of make-believe. Nevertheless, on this realist view, fictional names refer to fictional characters in these sentences.

But this reveals something implausible about the present realist strategy. Is it really plausible that when authors write a fiction they are ascribing properties to an abstract object that it could not possibly have? Indeed, is it plausible to construe authors as ascribing properties to any object whatsoever? Do we, when we engage with fiction, pretend that some abstract object is a detective? This is certainly not how things seem to be. Rather authors and their audience are pretending that there is a man who did such and such, not pretending of an abstract object that it is thus and so. This is not a knock-down argument against this form of realism, but we should note that our ordinary way of thinking about fiction is at odds with it.

A second, similar, problem with this kind of realism is that it seems to confuse depiction and what is depicted. Soames, a realist of this type says that

> Among the things that exist are stories, legends, novels, chapters, plays, movies, and the like. These are abstract objects created by authors. Fictional characters are constituents of these objects. Like the fictions of which they are a part, fictional characters are a special kind of real, existing object. . . . Typically, however, they are created with the special purpose of being depicted as, or playing the role of, something quite different (Soames 2002: 93).

But in the sense that fictional characters exist, they are not depicted. Rather, as parts of stories, as Soames says they are, they, like stories, depict. And parts of stories do not (usually) depict themselves. Writers are not, as a matter of course, writing about parts of their own stories. Rather fictional characters, as parts of stories, are representations, not what is represented.

A final problem with this form of realism is that, although as we have argued fictional characters exist, it is very much part of our practice to deny that fictional characters exist. 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' seems as true – and for the same reason – that Vulcan does not exist. We argued in Chapter 2 that we have a straightforward account of singular negative existentials only if we allow that empty names have a sense. The present realist who thinks that fictional names always (or nearly always) refer to fictional objects cannot help himself to this account (we return to this issue in Chapter 6).

For these three reasons then – the phenomenology of our engagement with fiction, the confusion of what is depicted and what depicts, and the best account of singular negative existentials – we must agree with the irrealist that some uses of fictional names do not refer:

Emptiness: For any fictional name, n, there are potential uses of n which do not refer.

Between them Reference and Emptiness entail that fictional names are ambiguous. This thesis has been motivated by considering different types of sentence containing fictional names. It is not surprising, though perhaps not expected, that prima facie very different types of sentence require different types of treatment. We shall defend this view against objections in Chapter 5.

Irrealist, accepting Emptiness, rejects Reference. They do this by extending the scope of the pretence beyond the content of the fictions themselves to cover our metafictional talk. But this, on its face, seems misguided. Our metafictional talk seems very different from the types of claims licensed by the claims made within a fiction. These claims seem literally true and moreover seem to be claims about the world, just as claims about fictions are. Irrealists are forced to appeal to ad hoc principles of generation for games of make-believe which allow them to capture true identity claims such as 'Ulysses is the same fictional character as Odysseus', and to capture our creative talk above. If such manoeuvres were forced upon us, then we would have to accept them. But at first appearance, this is not the case as Emptiness is consistent with Realism and Reference. And as I shall argue in the remaining chapters, nothing should make us abandon the default view consisting of Realism, Authorial Creationism, Reference and Emptiness.

Before, in the rest of the thesis, considering objections to the ontological, metaphysical and semantic components of the default view, let us say a little more about what we take to be the most plausible metaphysics of fictional characters.

2. The Metaphysics of Fiction and Fictional Characters

Realists and irrealists alike agree that fictions themselves exist and for some irrealists such as Walton (1990), recognition of the existence of fictions is essential.[47] Moreover, fictions, at least the literary type, are conceived of, by both realists and irrealists about fictional characters, as abstract objects, *in the sense that* they are not to be identified with paradigmatic concrete objects and that they are repeatable in that they have instances. Literary fictions, it seems, cannot be identified with any number of concrete instances of the fiction, since no particular instance or instances of a fiction are required for the continued existence of the fiction. This fact also rules out identifying fictions with pluralities, sets, or sums of their concrete instances, given the temporal and modal rigidity of plural inclusion, set membership, and the parthood relation of classical mereology.[48] One could construe literary fictions as (sui generis), scattered concrete objects, not identical to their concrete instances, but constituted by them. Just as more familiar concrete objects, such as organisms and artefacts, can gain and lose parts, and could have had parts different from those that they in fact do have, so too can fictions on this view.[49] If fictions were concrete objects of this type, then they would differ from other artefacts in that, plausibly, artefacts are not only individuated by their creators, but also by the material that originally constituted them, whereas this is not the case for fictions. That is, although it is plausible that the desk at which I am writing this chapter could not have been made from a material other than glass, nor from a wholly distinct piece of glass, *A Study in Scarlet* could have been first instanced not on the paper it was in fact first written on, but on some different piece of paper, in fact it could have been first instantiated in some different medium altogether, such as slate. Indeed novels can exist without any *copy* of the novel existing. An author may have the entire thing in his head or in digital form. If a designer dies before realizing the blueprint of a new car, then his car never existed. But if a poet dies before writing down his poem, his poem still existed, as is testified by the oral tradition that pre-dated the printing press.[50] Perhaps, then fictions are to be identified with scattered concrete

[47] At least we are concerned here with the debate between realists and irrealists about fictional characters against a shared background of realism about fictions. In considering one type of metaphysical objection to realism about fictional characters in Chapter 4, we consider an objection against repeatable artworks more generally, and find it lacking. Also the reason for thinking realism is part of the default view of fictional characters carries over mutatis mutandis to the case of fictions themselves.

[48] Sets are usually conceived of as abstract but Maddy (1990) seems to take impure sets to be concrete objects. Mereological sums are usually conceived of as concrete, but one may doubt this characterization given the similarity between sums, sets and other mathematical objects.

[49] This is how Sheehy (2006) thinks about social groups.

[50] I am also inclined to think that once created, fictions exist for evermore. That is, they can survive the destruction of all their copies and anyone who remembers them, although, as such, they will be epistemically inaccessible. Thomasson (1999: 7), on the other hand, thinks that fictional characters 'depend on literary works

objects not solely consisting of their concrete instances, but also of relevant informational states such as the mental states of the author and those who have heard or read the fiction, and the relevant hardware states?

In any case, the view that fictions are concrete objects is not plausible. Although we may talk of the location, weight or colour of a copy of a work of fiction, we do not talk this way about fictions themselves.[51] So, both realists and irrealists about fictional objects are committed to the existence of fictions as abstract objects. And this commitment is warranted. As Friend (2007: 149) notes it is not part of our practice to deny the existence of fictions, unless we are in the grip of some revisionary philosophical theory. Moreover, our ordinary practices also support the idea that, although abstract, fictions exist. If I see you reading a copy of Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* and I say 'that is my favourite book', I am not talking about the particular copy of the novel that you hold, but rather the novel of which you have a copy.

But if both irrealists and realists about fictional characters alike are committed to the existence of fictions, construed as abstract objects, then there can be no in-principle objection to the positing of abstract fictional characters, unless there are *particular* problems for admitting abstract fictional characters into our ontology which do not cause similar trouble for an ontology of fictions. In that case, those who accept the existence of fictions should, if they want to be consistent, accept the existence of fictional characters, since, as we have seen we have good reasons for admitting them into our ontology, and they are simply more of the same. More generally, unless there are irresolvable problems for fictional characters, regardless of whether these problems afflict fictions themselves, we should assent to the existence of fictional characters.

Of course, these considerations do not pronounce on the metaphysics of fictional characters. Rather, all that the previous argument establishes, provisionally at least, is that abstract fictional characters exist. The metaphysical questions of how they are to be individuated and

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in order to remain in existence'. She concludes this based on her observation that 'we treat fictional characters as ... existing because of their appearance in [fictions]'. But if 'because' here signals an epistemic explanation of why we think fictional characters exist, then her argument is invalid. Alternatively, if her premise makes a metaphysical dependence claim, it is not clear that it is true. So in either case her argument fails. In any case, nothing turns on taking a stand on this issue here.

[51] At least in the relevant sense. We do talk of the location of a novel, but in doing so we are talking about the setting of the novel, not the location of its concrete instances. Similarly, we may say that a poem is dark or that a story is colourful, but these are metaphorical uses of colour terms and do not pick out colour properties in the pertinent sense.

what properties they instantiate are left open. All we have is the anti-nominalistic claim that there are abstract fictional characters.

There are, broadly speaking, two types of realism about fictional characters, internal and external realism. Internal realists maintain that fictional characters are individuated by sets of properties, so that a weak form of the identity of indiscernibles holds. The properties which individuate fictional characters on this view are the properties which the fictional character has from the perspective of the fiction. So for example, Sherlock Holmes is individuated in part by having a brother called 'Mycroft' and by living at 221b Baker Street. That Holmes is individuated by such properties does not entail the literal truth of, for example, 'Sherlock Holmes has a brother called 'Mycroft''.

Internal realism is often combined with two further views. Firstly, with eternalism, the view that fictional characters are not created, but rather exist eternally. Secondly, with some thesis of plenitude about fictional characters, for example, that for any set of relevant properties S, there is a fictional character that corresponds to S. Plenitude and eternalism sit well together, since if fictional characters are not brought into existence, what ensures that when novelists write their fictions, there is a fictional character for them to write about? The obvious answer is that, any fictional character that anyone might write about already exists. To claim otherwise would be to posit some pre-existing harmony between the fictional characters that exist and the intentions of would be authors. In the other direction, if there is a fictional character corresponding to every set of relevant properties, it seems that the properties themselves are sufficient for the existence of the character, and so, on the assumption that properties are eternal, plenitude supports eternalism, and at least denies creationism.

It is hard to see how to divorce internal realism from eternalism and hence plenitude. If fictional characters are individuated by sets of properties internal to fictions, and these sets of properties already exist, then what more would be needed to ensure the existence of the fictional character to which the set corresponds. Not that some author write about the fictional character. As we have seen, however, Authorial Creationism is part of our ordinary way of thinking about fictional characters, and so internal realism has to be given up.

A realist about fictional characters who rejects Creationism, will try and capture our creationist talk in some deviant way. Typically they will say that authors take a character and

make it fictional by writing a story about it. But it seems perfectly coherent to suppose that, as we ordinarily say, a writer creates a fictional character before writing any fictions about it. That is, he may dream up a character, giving him a name, characteristics and a history, before deciding to write anything about him. Indeed, we can imagine a writing team one of whom is good at creating fictional characters, the other of whom is good at writing stories employing them. In such a situation, the first author creates the character without creating any narratives in which they appear. And presumably some such possibilities do in fact obtain – I have been told this was the case with Michael Moorcock's character Jerry Cornelious.[52] So, internal realism cannot respect the common sense claim that authors literally create fictional characters.

In any case there are further problems with internal realism. First, it is not intuitive that fictional characters are individuated solely by reference to properties attributed by the fiction. As Thomasson writes

> Suppose that a student happens upon two literary figures remarkably similar to each other; both, for example, are said to be maids, warding off attempts at seduction, and so on. Under what conditions would we say that these are works about one and the same fictional character? It seems that we would say that the two works are about the same only if we have reason to believe that the works derived from a common origin (Thomasson 1999: 6)

I share Thomasson's judgement, but many may not. We can bolster this claim by noting internal realism gives us no way to decide whether there are two distinct characters whenever externally related characters are described differently. For example, what makes the James Bond of *Casino Royale* the same as the James Bond of *Dr No*? The external realist has an answer, but the internal realist does not. The James Bond of *Dr No*, took as an input the James Bond of *Casino Royale*, reproducing and then modifying him. In general, reproduction seems key to individuating repeatable artworks including fictional characters.

[52] So we reject Brock's (2010) claim that it is a conceptual truth that "A fictional character is an individual picked out by a name or description first introduced in a work of fiction *F*, and referred to for the first time in the context of discussing *F"*.

Further, internal realism has the consequence that if an author had developed his work in slightly different ways, then he would have been writing about different fictional characters. For example, in Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes retires to a bee farm and writes *The Practical Handbook of Bee Culture, with some Observations upon the Segregation of the Queen*. Now if Conan Doyle had not acquiesced to public demand to bring back Holmes after killing him off at the Reichenbach falls, Holmes would not have been developed in this way. So according to internal realism, which individuates fictional characters by the properties of the stories in which they appear, if Conan Doyle had not acquiesced, he would have in fact been writing stories with a different fictional character. But ordinarily we do not think of fictional characters as being so modally fragile. We can wonder what would have happened if Holmes had married Irene Adler, for example. Would the public have rejected this Holmes, would Adler have turned her intellect to good? These have the feel of standard counterfactual questions, but cannot be construed as such if Holmes is as modally fragile as internal realism has it.

Our case against internal realism is not undermined by the fact that we sometimes seem to equate two externally distinct characters. For example, in explaining the *Bourne Trilogy* to someone I might say 'Jason Bourne is the James Bond character' or 'Jason Bourne is a James Bond type character'. Indeed, given the internal dissimilarity of Bourne and Bond it is hard to see how such statements could support internal realism. Of course this assumes that on internal realism fictional characters are individuated by all the properties attributed to them by the fictions they occur in and that such sets do not, as a matter of course, contain inconsistent properties. Perhaps there is room for an internal realism that abstracts away from some of properties encoded in fictions. Even so, this observation does not support internal realism to the *exclusion* of external realism. All it shows is that we need character-types or roles, not that we do not need externally-individuated fictional characters as well. Indeed given the truth appropriateness of 'Jason Bourne is not James Bond', it seems we do need both. And this should be no surprise. Just as we distinguish Barack Obama from the office he holds and Peter Shilton from the role he played for the England football team, so we should distinguish Jason Bourne from the role he plays. Roles, in fiction as elsewhere, may be individuated by properties internal to some practice, but it does not follow that the holders of the roles are so individuated.

Internal realism then had better be rejected in favour of external realism, which individuates characters not in terms of a set of properties ascribed to them by the fictions in which they appear, but rather by properties external to the fiction such as having been created by Zola at such and such a time or by being introduced on the first page of *Brighton Rock*. External realism solves the problems that faced internal realism. As a result, we can hold on to the intuition that fictional characters are literally created by authors, that fictional characters that occur in qualitatively identical stories may in fact be distinct, and that fictional characters are modally robust with respect to variation in their internal properties. Fictional characters then are metaphysically on a par with fictions.

Now that we have dispensed with internal realism, we can set out some more of the features of fictional characters. We need to distinguish between two different ways of thinking about abstract individuals. First, there is a way of thinking about abstract individuals which distinguishes them from concrete individuals, and which is not concerned with change over time or diachronic identity. Take a work such as a song or a play. Once this work has been written, we can ask when does a performance of a song or a play count as a performance of *that work*. As we have noted qualitative identity is not sufficient for the identity of works. Similarly, qualitative identity of performances is not sufficient for those performances to count as performances of the same work. For a performance to count as a performance of a particular work a causal link is required, and in particular the performance must properly instantiate or reproduce the work. This does not mean that qualitative identity of performances is necessary for two performances to count as performances of the same work, however, since different singers and directors can instantiate or perform the work in different ways. But perhaps some degree of qualitative similarity to the original work is required for a performance to count as a performance of a work. And what goes for *performances* of plays and songs, goes for *copies* of written works, including musical scores and plays, and also parts of them such as fictional characters. When we are considering what counts as a performance or instance of an abstract individual in this sense, we are not concerned with the identity of the abstract individual over time or its development. This is not to say that there cannot be different adaptations of a work, because there can be. Rather such adaptations do not change any of the intrinsic features of the work. The work remains the same intrinsically, and what changes is that it is given new token and new types of performance.

But there is a second way in which we think about abstract individuals, which does not distinguish them from concrete individuals, and which is concerned with change over time and diachronic identity. A striking feature of fictional characters is that they can be developed over time, and can change quite remarkably. Homer Simpson, in his initial incarnation on the Tracey Ullman show, was a crude and not particularly funny character, but over the years, with a team of writers, Homer has developed into the loveable, selfish idiot that we know today. So just like concrete objects, whether they be artefacts, or organisms, abstract individuals can change in radical, though perhaps not completely unconstrained, ways over time. Just as *a single tree* can change *its* intrinsic properties over time, growing in size, changing in shape and health, so can a fictional character change *its* intrinsic properties over time, first encoding only a few properties, then many more, first being crude and uninteresting, then becoming well crafted and nuanced.

This might at first seem like a disanalogy with other artworks and abstract individuals. In one way it does reflect a difference, but the surface phenomenon of change over time is common to other cases too. A writer of a book, whether it be fiction or non-fiction, will usually write several drafts of it. These are not like the performances of a work or the distinct print runs of a book. The author here is not taking an abstract individual and producing performances or instantiations of it. Rather he is, initially creating, and then changing an abstract individual. Once he and the editors are finished, the book is published. And what goes for books goes for musical works too, and even languages like Esperanto.

Unlike in the case of fictional characters, however, most of this development is hidden from the public eye. These types of abstract individual do not usually see the light of day until they are finished, or in some sense complete. But this is inessential. Authors often circulate drafts of their work, and books, including novels, are often amended and given a second revised edition. Moreover, some abstract individuals do develop in the public eye in the same way in which fictional characters do: constitutions are rewritten or amended, and the rules of cricket and football are revised over time. So it is part of our ordinary thinking about abstract individuals that they both have instances, performances, copies etc, and that they are created, and can change their intrinsic properties over time.

I said that the fact that fictional characters were recognized to change over time in a more transparent way than some other abstract individuals, notably artworks, reflected a difference

between fictional characters and these other abstract individuals. That difference is that often, but not always, fictional characters span other artworks in a way in which other artworks do not. That is, a fictional character can be a part of many stories, in a way in which, typically at least, other artworks are not parts of several different artworks. Of course, a song may be *performed* in several different films.

This feature of fictional characters raises the question of how a fictional character gets into a fiction? One way a fictional character will get 'into' a fiction is when a writer writes a fiction that creates him. A second way that a character gets into a fiction is when he is reproduced. Once Sherlock Holmes is in a *Study in Scarlet*, initially, he will be in future *copies* of a *Study in Scarlet* in just the same way that a copy of a *Study in Scarlet* is a copy of that work: through proper reproduction. If I produce a copy of a *Study in Scarlet*, I thereby produce a copy of a work that contains Sherlock Holmes.[53]

But there is a third way in which a fictional character can get into a fiction, and that is the way in which objects which have nothing essentially to do with fiction get into fictions, namely, by being referred to. Napoleon, the flesh and blood Emperor of France, is a character in *War and Peace* because Tolstoy referred to him in the course of writing *War and Peace*. Tolstoy then writes various things about him, some of which are true and some of which are false. Of course, Tolstoy in writing a fiction is not putting forward claims about Napoleon to be assessed for their truth or falsity, but that does not matter: some of the descriptive material in the book Napoleon satisfies and some he does not. Similarly, just as an author can write about a real emperor by referring to him, an author could write about a fictional character by referring to it. And of course this has been done many times in nonfiction. But a writer could get a fictional character into a fiction, in just the same way that an author gets an emperor into a fiction, or a nonfiction writer gets an emperor or fictional character into a work of nonfiction.

So on the present account we must distinguish between uses of a fictional name in a fiction which fail to refer, which is the usual case, from uses which do refer, which happens in the final type of case described above. All this will become relevant in Chapter 6 when we discuss other realist accounts of fictional singular negative existentials, and when we consider

[53] We should not read this spatial terminology too literally.

Everett's (2007) case of Piglet and 'πιγλετ', which could be construed as a counterexample to the account of fictional characters and fictional names offered here.

One question that needs to be addressed in any fully worked out theory of fictional characters is precisely how and when are fictional characters created? We can distinguish two broad answers to these questions. First we could have a thin realism, which says that fictional characters are the shadows of fictional names used by authors: whenever an author pretends to refer, she creates a fictional character (see our discussion of Brock in Chapter 4). Such an answer seems to over generate fictional characters as it does not distinguish characters from what we might call mere extras. Is it really the case that a name used once in passing by an author is sufficient to create a fictional character? Second, we could avoid these problems by adopting a thick realism on which there are substantive constitutive conditions on creating fictional characters, just as there are, perhaps, substantive constitutive conditions on creating a fiction. The thick realist, however, owes us an account of what these conditions are. For example, some creationists (Schiffer 1996, 2003) say that a fictional object is created only when a certain make-believe process has come to an end. This is an interesting and complicated question, and one that we shall not try to adjudicate here. For the purposes of argument we shall assume thin realism in the remainder of the thesis as it seems harder to defend and does not require setting out the constitutive conditions on creation.

3 Conclusion

So the default view of fictional characters is both realist and creationist. The default view of fictional names is that they are ambiguous, both having a use on which they refer to abstract entities and a use on which they fail to refer.

There are, I think, three types of objection to the default view about fictional characters.[54] First, it may be thought that the ambiguity posited here is simply implausible, despite being well-motivated. We shall outline and respond to this objection in Chapter 5 by arguing that it rests on a false assumption which has been accepted only because a restricted diet of examples. Once we cast the net more widely, and examine the issue more systematically, we

[54] One could also raise an epistemological objection which trades on the fact fictional characters are, in some sense, *abstract*. But we are here taking for granted that we are happy with the existence of, and our knowledge of, other abstract individuals such as fictions. Such an objection then would be, in the present context, out of place as it is not an especial problem for realists about fictional characters.

shall find that the ambiguity of fictional names is not implausible after all, and that the phenomena found should be expected given the type of ambiguity posited.

Once we have outlined this response, this will allow us to deal with the second type of objection to creationism, namely the fact that we are, in some sense, intuitively irrealists about fictional characters, which is manifested in the fact that we accept many singular negative existentials as true which involve fictional names. We shall see in Chapter 6 that once we embrace the polysemy of fictional names outlined above and defended in Chapter 5, the realist about fictional names can help himself to the best account of singular negative existentials which we argued for in Chapter 2. Moreover, largely following Everett (2007), we shall argue that only the realist about fictional characters who accepts the polysemy of fictional names can provide an adequate account of fictional singular negative existentials, and so this constitutes another argument in favour of the polysemy of fictional names, given realism about fictional characters.

The final type of objection to fictional characters, which we shall consider in the next chapter, is metaphysical in character. Really, there are a variety of objections to the creationist metaphysics sketched above. We shall consider the most prominent and find them all wanting.

Chapter 4: Metaphysical Objection to Creationism

In this chapter we consider the first set of objections to the default view of fictional characters which we outlined and argued for in the previous chapter. This family of objections highlight what are thought to be problems with the metaphysics of the default view. Some of the objections are directed against realism about fictional characters per se, others against any form of abstract realism, and yet others against creationism. None of the objections, though, are decisive. In fact, none of the metaphysical objections that we shall consider even threaten the plausibility of the creationist metaphysics of the default view.[55] We shall see then, that the metaphysical part of the default view is left unscathed.

1. Objections from Abstractness

Deutsch (1991) offers the following argument against creationism about fictional characters.

(1) Fictional characters are abstract objects.
(2) Abstract objects exist necessarily and cannot stand in causal relations.
(3) Creating a thing entails bringing it into being or causing it to exist.

Therefore

(4) Fictional characters are not created.

Note that Deutsch's argument is not an argument against realism per se, but only against creationism. Realists about fictional characters such as Parsons (1980) and Lewis (1978) who think that fictional objects are concrete will reject (1), although this does not really get to the root of the issue for them, since objects which do not actually exist cannot be manipulated causally. In any case, all non-creationist realists will deny (3). For them, fictional objects cannot be causally manipulated by us, and so they have to give some account of our creationist talk. As we have argued, this is not a very plausible position, and misses out on the real motivation for being a realist in the first place.

[55] There are distinct metaphysical objections to other versions of realism about fictional characters which we omit as our version of creationism is not even alleged to be subject to these. See Sainsbury (2009 *passim* but see Chapter 5 especially §5.4) for a summary of these.

But on the creationism endorsed here, fictional characters are not like paradigmatic concrete objects, so on some reading of (1), (1) is to be accepted. Moreover, according to creationism, fictional characters are literally created, and not simply discovered, just as concrete artefacts are, and so some version of (3) must also be accepted. Similarly, the creationist must reject Deutsch's conclusion, and so must either reject Deutsch's argument as invalid or else reject (2).

First, we should note that as it stands, Deutsch's argument is dialectically ineffective. If (2) could be established, then that in itself would be sufficient to refute creationism, which denies that all abstract objects, and in particular that fictional characters, exist necessarily. But noting this does not get to the heart of the issue, since Deutsch's argument can avoid this response, and would be dialectically more effective, if we were to replace (2) with the weaker

(5) Abstract objects cannot stand in causal relations.

Alternatively, we could simply replace (2) and (3) with

(6) Abstract Objects cannot be created

But leaving the precise formulation of Deutsch's argument to one side, there is reason to reject it since, as Brock notes, Deutsch's argument generalizes to other artworks which those who reject creationism about fictional characters typically concede are created

> If it presents a genuine problem for creationist views about fictional characters, the argument will also, mutatis mutandis, present a genuine problem for creationist views about artworks generally. Novels, symphonies, poems, and plays are all abstract objects if fictional characters are. The last two premises can thus be used to the same effect to demonstrate that such works of art are not created by their authors and composers. (Brock 2010: 342)

Such a conclusion is implausible, but I think it is no more implausible than denying creationism about fictional characters, a thesis Brock himself rejects. So as long as the anti-creationist about fictional characters is willing to embrace a more thoroughgoing anti-

creationism, he will be unmoved by Brock's generalizing manoeuvre. Indeed Brock himself claims that

> Although creationists have advanced many arguments in support of the ontological thesis [that fictional characters exist], arguments in support of the fundamental thesis [that fictional characters are created by their authors] are almost completely lacking. Usually, the thesis is simply taken for granted and assumed to be intuitively obvious to anyone who reflects upon it (Brock 2010: 342).

But what Brock says about fictional characters we can say about artworks more generally: it is often taken for granted that artworks are created, not argued. Of course, in Chapter 3 we offered arguments in favour of creationism about fictional characters and some artworks more generally, so we do have good reason to be creationists. In any case, we can note that the same type of argument has been offered in the case of other artworks, and so we cannot simply reject Deutsch's argument on the basis that it overgenerates, as some anti-creationists about fictional characters are anti-creationists about repeatable artworks more generally. Cameron (2008), for example, presents us with the following 'paradox' which mirrors Deutsch's argument against creationism about fictional characters:

(7) Musical works are created.
(8) Musical works are abstract objects.
(9) Abstract objects cannot be created.[56]

And what goes for musical works presumably goes for other repeatable artworks characterized as abstract.[57]

[56] Cameron (2008) responds to the 'paradox' by distinguishing between ordinary English in which claims like 'musical works exist' and 'musical works are created' are true, and a language for doing fundamental ontology, Ontologese, in which such claims are false. Unfortunately, we do not speak Ontologese, and Cameron provides no phrase book, so we literally do not understand what Cameron is saying when he says there are musical works but **there are no musical works**, where bold indicates Ontologese. In any case, we shall see that such desperate measures are not needed in order to resolve Cameron's 'paradox'.

[57] To be fair to Cameron (2008: 296 n3), he explicitly says that "As is common in this debate, I am confining my attention to works of Western classical music; it should not be supposed that what we say here should generalize to other works of music, and certainly not to art works in general." But analogous versions of the 'paradox' will arise for creationism about other repeatable artworks – see below.

Hazlett (Forthcoming) argues against the existence of any repeatable artworks such as symphonies, novels and fictional characters. His argument is as follows:

(10) If there are repeatable artworks, they are abstract objects
(11) No abstract object has any accidental intrinsic properties
(12) All artworks (including repeatable artworks) have at least one accidental intrinsic property

Therefore,

(13) There are no repeatable artworks.

Hazlett notes that Rohrbaugh (2003: 177-95) presents a similar argument against identifying repeatable artworks with types: artworks have some accidental properties, can change their properties, and do not exist eternally, whereas types lack all of these features, and so repeatable artworks can't be types. Hazlett's argument is a generalization of Rohrbaugh's, although for presentational purposes, he focuses only on the accidental properties of repeatable artworks.

So here we see that there is a general form of argument against creationism about repeatable artworks which runs as follows, if the argument targets creationism but not other versions of realism

(14) Repeatable artworks of type A are abstract objects
(15) If creationism is true, repeatable artworks of type A have feature F
(16) No abstract object has feature F

Therefore,

(17) Creationism about repeatable artworks of type A is false

Or takes the following form if it targets realism per se

(18) If they exist, repeatable artworks of type A are abstract objects
(19) If they exist, repeatable artworks of type A have feature F
(20) No abstract object has feature F

Therefore,

(21) There are no repeatable artworks of type A[58]

In the above discussion, feature F is being created or standing in causal relations (Deutsch, Cameron), or having accidental intrinsic properties (Hazlett). But given that abstract objects are often taken to be one or more of the following: not located in space, not located in time, not causal agents, not causal patients, immutable and unchanging, eternal, have no accidental properties, exist necessarily, and to be identical if qualitatively indiscernible;[59] there are many versions of the schematic argument one could run in principle.[60] In what follows, let us say that an object that has whatever balance of these features we are concerned with is ABSTRACT1.

Now, as I argued in Chapter 3, fictional characters, like other repeatable artworks, are not paradigmatic concrete objects because (i) they cannot be identified with their instances, and (ii) because they are repeatable in the sense that they have instances, and paradigmatic concrete objects do not have instances. So *in this sense* they are abstract. Let us say that objects that have instances are ABSTRACT2. But notice that the commitment embodied in the claim that fictional characters are abstract in this sense does not decide whether fictional characters are abstract in the sense of having any of the features listed above. That is, prima facie at least, being ABSTRACT2 does not entail being ASBTRACT1.

The creationist then, can accept the schematic argument, when the first premise concerns ABSTRACT2 entities and the third premise concerns ABSTRACT1 entities, but notes that the argument is invalid on such a reading. On the other hand, why should the creationist accept either valid version of the argument? A creationist will not accept that repeatable artworks of type A are ABSTRACT1, but only that they are ABSTACT2. But what reason do they have for accepting that no ABSTRACT2 object has feature F? That is, what reason is there to accept that objects which have instances are nonspatial, nontemporal, immutable, etc? Sainsbury, an irrealist about fictional characters, sees the essence of the point, even if he is not correct on the details: for the creationist, fictional characters "are abstract not in the

[58] Although we are here focussing on repeatable artworks, there is an even more general version of the argument which replaces 'repeatable artworks of type A' with 'entities of type E'. What I say below applies just as much to the generalized version of the argument as it does to the version which focuses on repeatable artworks.
[59] See Lewis (1986: 81–86), Hale (1987: 45–77), Burgess and Rosen (1997: 13–25), and Rosen (2006) for some discussion of the characterization of abstract objects.
[60] This is not to suggest that creationism about repeatable artworks is committed to denying that repeatable artworks have any of these features, however.

Platonic sense of being eternal and immutable, but simply in that they are nonspatial and nonmental" (2009: 91). So, without some argument that being ASBTRACT2 entails being ABSTRACT1, the schematic argument against creationism, and the versions of it discussed above, are to be rejected as either invalid or otherwise uncompelling.

If everything is either concrete or ASBTRACT1, then given that it is agreed on all sides that repeatable artworks are not concrete, they would have to be ASBTRACT1, if they existed. But it is by no means obvious that everything is concrete or ASBTRACT1. Indeed, repeatable artworks appear to be a counterexample to the claim that everything is either concrete or ABSTRACT1, as do some other non-concrete objects such as constitutions and games. This is simply to say that the argument schema some things that are not concrete are ~F, repeatable artworks of type A are not concrete, therefore repeatable artworks of type A are ~F is formally invalid, and is not compelling. There is no simple way to get from the fact that some types of objects in the rag-bag collection that philosophers label 'abstract' are ~F, to the claim that some other, prima facie very different type of object in that same highly gruesome collection, is also ~F.

So nothing about repeatable artworks follows from Yablo's (2003) observation about the intrinsic properties of mathematical objects, which Hazlett (Forthcoming) endorses:

> Not a whole lot is essential to me: my identity, my kind, my origins, consequences of these, and that is pretty much it. Of my intrinsic properties, it seems arguable that none are essential, or at least none specific enough to distinguish me from others of my kind. … I have by contrast *huge* numbers of accidental properties, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Almost any property one would ordinarily think of is a property I could have existed without. … Abstract objects … are a different story. I do not know what the intrinsic properties of the empty set are, but odds are that they are mostly essential. Pure sets are not the kind of thing that we expect to go through intrinsic change between one world and another. Likewise integers, reals, functions on these, and so on (Yablo 2002: 220).

We can agree with Yablo and Hazlett that the intrinsic properties of sets and other mathematical objects are essential. Indeed, we can accept this claim for some non-

mathematical abstracta as well. Let us say, for the sake of argument, that as well as mathematical objects, pure universals, tropes and propositions, if there are any, all have their intrinsic properties essentially. But it does not follow from these observations, and is not even made plausible by them, either that repeatable artworks have their intrinsic properties essentially, or that there are no such artworks. It does not help to note that, unlike the other items in our list above, pure universals are repeatable and have instances. Since from this fact, and the claim that pure universals have their intrinsic properties essentially, it does not follow that any type of entity which has instances has their intrinsic properties essentially. Repeatable artworks, despite sharing this feature with pure universals are, prima facie, very different types of entity. For example, pure universals, but not repeatable artworks, obey the qualitative identity of indiscernibles and are not created. Indeed, even if there were some other type of entity, E, which shared a whole range of features with repeatable artworks, it would not be legitimate to infer that since Es have their intrinsic properties essentially, repeatable artworks do, especially given the fact that this it at odds with how we ordinarily think about repeatable artworks. Similarly, noting that numbers and sets are not created and do not stand in causal relations, does nothing to support the claim that anything which is not concrete, and, in particular, that anything which is ABSTRACT2, does not stand in causal relations and is not created.

Cameron and Deutsch seem to rely on the claim that everything is either concrete or ABSTRACT1. But this, as I have argued, is an unwarranted assumption. The correct approach to metaphysics is not to decide what metaphysical categories there are based on a few examples, and then decree that everything must fall into one of these categories. Rather we should examine the actual structure and features of things and categorize them on the basis of those features. The labels ‘concrete’ and ‘abstract’ are occasionally useful, but here they are a hindrance. Shadows and tables are both labelled ‘concrete’, but they are obviously very different types of entity and we should not expect that generalizations about medium-sized dry goods hold of light phenomena. And the same goes, it would appear, for numbers and fictional characters.

My approach in the last Chapter is similar to the commonsensical approach of Thomasson (1999). For any putative type of entity, E, we ask: What sort of things are Es (if there are any)? Once we have decided how Es appear to be, we can see if there are any problems construing them in this default way. If there are, then we may need to modify our account, or

reject the existence of Es altogether. But if there are not, then we are free to take things as they seem to be. So without further argument, these objections, which trade on the non-concrete nature of repeatable artworks, are hopeless. So, is any additional argument supplied which would show that being ASBTRACT2 entails being ABSTRACT1, or which otherwise support the arguments from abstractness above?

Both Cameron and Hazlett accept that repeatable artworks are not to be identified with token concrete or physical objects. In addition Hazlett explicitly accepts that repeatable artworks, if they exist, are not concrete since they have instances. So Cameron and Hazlett's reasons for accepting that repeatable artworks are, in some sense, abstract are the same as those given above. That is, they think repeatable artworks are ABSTRACT2. But why do they think that ABSTRACT2 entities are ASBTRACT1 entities?

Cameron says only the following:

> abstract objects cannot be the relata of causal relations — they can neither exert a causal influence or be causally acted upon; hence, abstract objects cannot be created. [This claim] can be resisted, of course. ... [But this is] controversial, however, and I am tempted to side with Dodd in his claim that abstract objects cannot be created, and as a consequence that if it is true at any time that an abstract object *a* exists, then it is true at all times that *a* exists (Cameron 2008: 296-297).

This is hardly decisive and should not move any creationist. Of course, we can allow that ABSTRACT1 entities cannot be created, but the question here is whether ABSTARCT2 entities can be, and Cameron has provided us with no reason to think that they cannot be. As we have said before, it needs to be argued that everything is either concrete or ASBTRACT1, not assumed.

Hazlett, however, advances an argument for his claim that abstract objects have their intrinsic properties essentially. If this argument is applicable to ABSTRACT2 objects, then the creationist about repeatable artwork does face a problem. The starting point of Hazlett's argument is the observation that

> the existence of (pure) abstract objects (whatever this amounts to) makes no demands on the world (in a sense that would eventually need to be articulated). There is nothing the world must be like for it to be the case that (in whatever sense this is true) (pure) abstract objects exist. The necessary existence of the number 2 (whatever this amounts to) isn't a matter of there being a stubborn regularity across the space of possible worlds, with each of them having a 2 in it (Hazlett Forthcoming).

He then argues that it is the fact that abstract objects have their intrinsic properties essentially which explains why abstract objects make no demands on the world.

One might question Hazlett's premise that abstract objects make no demands on the world, but something like it has been defended by others (see Fine's (2003) distinction between transcendent and necessary truths). In any case, let's accept the premise for the sake of argument. Hazlett continues:

> it turns out to be their maximally constraining essences that explains why the existence of abstract objects can be gotten for free in this way. For suppose that x has some accidental intrinsic property F. In some worlds x is F, and in others x isn't F, and there are worlds in which x changes from being F to not being F. But if x is like that, then it becomes impossible to see how the existence of x could "made no demands on the world," for if x is like that, then x is clearly a denizen of the world, not a trivial existent that can be had for free, as it were, as Yablo and Cameron argue. ... What we cannot make sense of is the idea that the existence of the number 2 makes no demands on the world, whilst the number 2 undergoes intrinsic changes as a result of changes in the world.
>
> So I conclude that abstracts objects have all their intrinsic properties essentially (Hazlett Forthcoming).[61]

[61] That F be an accidental property of mine, so that it is possible for me to be F and it is possible for me to be ~F does not entail that it is possible for me to change from being F to being ~F, or vice versa. But Hazlett's point is unaffected by this observation.

Whatever the merits of Hazlett's argument, it is hard to see the relevance of it to our present concerns. The creationist does not accept that fictional characters exist necessarily and make no demands on the world, so he does not need to explain this by appealing to the claim that they have their properties essentially. Nor can Hazlett appeal to the premise that all abstract objects exist necessarily, since he accepts that "{Eiffel Tower} exists only if the Eiffel Tower exists" (Hazlett Forthcoming), and given that the Eiffel Tower is a contingent existent, so is {Eiffel Tower}.

Hazlett recognizes that what he said above needs to be modified to cover abstract objects such as {Eiffel Tower} since it is not true that {Eiffel Tower} makes no demands on the world; a prerequisite of its existence is the existence of the Eiffel Tower. Nevertheless Hazlett claims that

> the existence of {Eiffel Tower} also makes no demands on the world, at least in the sense that the existence of {Eiffel Tower} is nothing over and above the existence of the Eiffel Tower. There is no additional way the world must be to ensure that, in addition to the Eiffel Tower, it also includes {Eiffel Tower}. The existence of {Eiffel Tower} makes no demands of its own on the world; the only demands made are those made by the existence of the Eiffel Tower (Hazlett Forthcoming).

Now just as pure sets have their properties essentially, so do impure sets. And presumably Hazlett thinks that in both cases it is this that explains why abstract objects make no demands on the world, however we are to understand that claim. But what is the argument for supposing that all supervenient entities, like impure sets, have all their intrinsic properties essentially? Supervenient entities do make a demand on the world, even if it is a demand already imposed by their subvening base. But given this there is no barrier to the supervenient entity having accidental properties, since this was only argued to be in conflict with the claim that an entity makes no claim *whatsoever* on the world.

Hazlett notes that sets do not inherit their intrinsic properties from their members, the things on which their existence supervenes. So perhaps this observation is the basis for an argument that all abstract entities have their intrinsic properties essentially. It is plausible that for supervenient objects, there can be no modal variation in the intrinsic properties that they do

not inherit from their supervenience base, since if there were it is hard to see how they impose no extra demand on the world. And since sets do not inherit their intrinsic properties from their elements, this would explain why there is no modal variation in the intrinsic properties of sets. So what Hazlett would have to show is that repeatable artworks do not inherit all of their modally flexible intrinsic properties. But this he cannot do. The intrinsic properties of an artwork are inherited from the processes involved in its creation and modification. For example, the properties a fictional character encodes depends upon the stories it appears in. But given that the stories in which a fictional character can appear in can vary, there is nothing to prevent the properties that a fictional character encodes form varying. So Hazlett's argument for the modal inflexibility of the intrinsic properties does not work for fictional characters. Moreover, the same considerations show it does not work for repeatable artworks and perhaps for ABSTRACT2 objects more generally. And this is not a surprise as we knew all along that entities whose existence supervenes on the properties of other entities can have accidental intrinsic properties: simply take any macroscopic concrete object. So Hazlett's argument for the claim that all abstract entities have their properties essentially fails. The challenge to creationism from abstractness, then, is answered.

2. The Alleged Indeterminacy of Fictional Characters

If there are fictional characters, as the realist maintains, then there must be a certain number of them. Indeed, there must be determinate number of them, for whilst a fiction may leave open the number of characters within it, since fictions can be incomplete, the world cannot leave open the number of fictional characters in reality corresponding to a work of fiction, or so the thought goes. But it is also plausible that how many fictional characters there are is determined by the relevant works of fiction. So it might be thought that if it is indeterminate how many characters a fiction is about, it will be indeterminate how many fictional characters there are in reality. So here we have an inconsistent triad: A fiction can leave it undecided how many characters there are; if a fiction leaves it open how many characters there are, then it is indeterminate how many fictional characters there are in reality; but it cannot be that it is indeterminate how many fictional characters there are in reality. Below I consider three distinct, though related, challenges of this type for the realist, which arise from considerations of indeterminacy.

2.1. Indeterminacy of Identity

It seems that fictions can contain cases where it is indeterminate whether one fictional character is identical to another fictional character. Anthony Everett (2005) argues that this leads to a problem for realists about fictional characters, since the indeterminacy within the fiction is carried over into reality, and that there cannot be indeterminacy of this latter type in reality. That is, if it is indeterminate in a fiction whether *a* is identical to *b*, then, Everett claims, the realist is committed to saying that the fictional character *a* is indeterminately identical with fictional character *b*. But there is a widely accepted, though controversial, argument, due to Gareth Evans (1978), for the conclusion that there can be no such thing as indeterminate identity.[62] And so, Everett concludes, realism about fictional characters is to be rejected. I shall grant, for the sake of argument, that Evans' argument against indeterminate identity is sound, or at least that if realism about fictional characters is committed to indeterminate identities, this makes the position less attractive. The question then is, is Everett correct that realism about fictional characters is committed to worldly indeterminate identities?

Consider the following short story taken from Schneider and Solodkoff (2009)

> *Bah Tale*
> There once was a man called Bahrooh
> There once was a man called Bahraah
> But nobody knew if Bahraah was Bahrooh
> Or if they were actually two

Everett claims (2005: 629) of a similar case that 'it is pretty clear that in this story it is left indeterminate as to whether [Bahraah] is [Bahrooh]'. So the first premise of Everett's argument against realism about fictional characters is

(22) It is indeterminate whether Bahraah = Bahrooh in the world of Bah Tale

Everett's second premise is the following biconditional

[62] See also Lewis (1988). For a rejection of Evans' argument see Williams (2008).

(23) (It is indeterminate whether Bahraah = Bahrooh in the world of Bah Tale) ≡ (it is indeterminate whether the fictional character Bahraah = the fictional character Bahrooh)

Everett then concludes by modus ponens that

(24) It is indeterminate whether the fictional character Bahraah = the fictional character Bahrooh.

And so the realist about fictional characters is committed to indeterminate identity.

Everett supports (23) by recourse to the following principle:

(25) If a story concerns *a* and *b*, and *a* and *b* are not real things, then (*a* = *b* in the world of the story) ≡ (the fictional entity *a* = the fictional entity *b*).

Now (25) only supports (23) given the 'plausible assumption that the biconditional in [(25)] preserves indeterminacy' (Everett (2005: 629)) so that (25) entails

(26) If a story concerns *a* and *b*, and if *a* and *b* are not real things, then (it is indeterminate whether *a* = *b* in the world of the story) ≡ (it is indeterminate whether the fictional character *a* = the fictional character *b*).

(23) is an instance of the biconditional in the schema (26), so given that Bahraah and Bahrooh are not real things, (26) underwrites (23).

Schneider and Solodkoff (2009: 140) however note that (22) is ambiguous between the following two readings:

(27) It is left-open whether in the world of *Bah Tale*: Bahraah = Bahrooh
(28) In the world of *Bah Tale*: it is indeterminate whether Bahraah = Bahrooh.

As Schneider and Solodkoff note, the natural reading of the story supports (27) rather than (28). That is, the story *leaves it open* whether or not Bahraah is Bahrooh, rather than the story saying that Bahraah is indeterminately identical to Bahrooh.

Given (27) we have the falsity of the following two claims

(29) According to Bah Tale Bahraah = Bahrooh
(30) According to Bah Tale Bahraah ≠ Bahrooh

But as Schneider and Solodkoff note, (29) and (30) just reflect the familiar incompleteness of fictions, in this case that the fiction is incomplete with respect to the identity properties of its characters. They do not by themselves yield any kind of indeterminacy. Moreover, when (22) is understood as (27), Everett's argument is invalid since (27) cannot be combined with (23) to yield (24), only (28) can be so combined. This is because it is only plausible to allow that (25) transmits indeterminacy, if the indeterminacy on both sides of the biconditional is the same. But the indeterminacy that Everett wants on the right-hand side of (26) is not whether Bah Tale leaves some fact open, but indeterminacy in the nature of things in reality. So what Everett needs is not (26) but

(31) If a story concerns *a* and *b*, and if *a* and *b* are not real things, then (it is left open by the story whether *a* = *b*) ⊃ (it is indeterminate whether the fictional character *a* = the fictional character *b*).[63]

Now (31) is not entailed by Everett's principle (25), so if Everett wants to make the valid version of his argument compelling he needs to supply support for (31). One way to support (31) would be to note that even though Everett's original argument is blocked, realists about fictional characters still face the following question: is the fictional character Bahraah identical with the fictional character Bahrooh? Unless the realist can answer this question, then her position is incomplete, and without an answer, (31) may begin to look plausible. So can the realist provide an answer to this question and thereby block any temptation we have to endorse (31)?

[63] Schneider and Solodkoff use the biconditional version of (31) but only the left-right direction embodied by (31) is needed in order to validate Everett's argument.

Schneider and Solodkoff propose the following principle as a way of providing an answer to the realist's question

(32) If *a* and *b* are fictional entities originating in story S, then (the fictional entity *a* = the fictional entity *b*) ≡ (According to the story S (*a* = *b*)).[64]

(32) blocks the route from Bah Tale to indeterminate identity. Since it is not the case that according to Bah Tale that Bahraah is Bahrooh, then, by (32), the fictional character Bahraah is not identical to Bahrooh. So if (32) can be defended, the realist has a solution to the problems raised by Bah Tale. But before considering if (32) is defensible, we should see how Schneider and von Solodkoff employ it to deal with further problematic cases for the realist.

As we saw above, Bah Tale itself was not a case of a fiction according to which two characters are indeterminately identical. But, as Schneider and von Solodkoff note, Everett could simply re-run his argument with a revised example such as the following

Bah Tale II
There once was a man called Bahrooh
There once was a man called Bahraah
But nothing determined if Bahraah was Bahrooh
Or if they were actually two.

Here we do have a story which supports a claim like (30), and so Everett can run his argument as he originally intended, that is, by exploiting (23). But, if the realist follows Schneider and von Solodkoff in endorsing (32), she will reject Everett's (23) and (25), from which it plausibly follows. Moreover, Schneider and von Solodkoff's (32) seems just as plausible as Everett's (25), so by following Schneider and von Solodkoff, the realist can provide a seemingly plausible answer to the question of whether the characters from Bah Tale II are identical or not: by (32) they are not, since it is not the case that according to Bah Tale, Bahrooh = Bahraah.

[64] We argued in Chapter 3 that fictional characters need not originate in any story, so (32) is incomplete. We shall ignore this below.

Everett also presents a distinctive kind of case of identity which he takes as problematic for the realist, which we can illustrate with the following tale from Schneider and von Solodkoff:[65]

> Bah Tale III
> Bahrooh and Bahraah were strange lads
> Bahrooh was Bahraah and yet
> Bahraah not Bahrooh
> A riddle that is – do you know what to do?

In the face of examples like Bah Tale III, Everett thinks that the realist about fictional characters must conclude both that Bahrooh and Bahraah are identical, and that Bahrooh and Bahraah are not identical. But this is a contradiction, so if Everett is correct, realism about fictional characters is untenable.

Given (32), however, this contradiction does not follow. Rather what follows from (32) is that Bahrooh and Bahraah *are* identical, since according to Bah Tale III, Bahrooh = Bahraah. To derive the conclusion that Bahrooh and Bahraah are non-identical from (32), and so end up with Everett's contradiction, we would need the claim that it is not the case according to Bah Tale III that Bahrooh and Bahraah are identical (and as Schneider and Solodkoff note, the same holds, perhaps, for Everett's principle (25)). But, as we have seen this is false, even though it is true that according to Bah Tale III, Bahrooh ≠ Bahraah. Moreover, for any story for which it is not the case that according to the story a=b we will not, by (32), have it that Bahrooh and Bahraah are identical. So no contradiction threatens, if we accept (32) (or perhaps even if we accept Everett's (25)).

So, assuming that (32) is well motivated, the realist has an answer to the puzzles of identity presented by Everett. It is clear, I think, that on the way of approaching the problem that we are considering, the realist must accept something like (32). For example, the following principle is simply not plausible

[65] Everett (2005) in fact presents what he thinks are two distinct objections to realism. Stories like Bah Tale and the story of The Slynx below, he takes to show the realist is committed to ontic indeterminacy, whereas stories like Bah Tale III lead to logical incoherence. And he is correct in thinking of things this way. But I shall follow Schneider and von Solodkoff in considering the problems concerning identity together, and considering the other problems of indeterminacy separately.

(33) If *a* and *b* are fictional entities originating in story S, then (the fictional entity *a* ≠ the fictional entity *b*) ≡ (According to the story S (*a* = *b*)).

But noting this is insufficient to support (32), since although (33) is implausible, the following criterion of identity for fictional characters is not:

(34) If *a* and *b* are fictional entities originating in story S, then (the fictional entity *a* = the fictional entity *b*) ≡ (It is not the case that according to the story S (*a* ≠ *b*)).[66]

But (32) and (34) are not extensionally equivalent. Since it is neither the case that according to Bah Tale nor according to Bah Tale II that Bahrooh and Bahraah are identical nor that they are not identical, (32) rules that the Bahrooh and Bahraah of both tales are not identical, whereas (34) rules that the Bahrooh and Bahraah of both tales are identical. Similarly, given that according to Bah Tale III, Bahrooh and Bahraah are both identical and non-identical, (32) identifies Bahrooh and Bahraah whereas (34) distinguishes them.

Now the presence of (32) and (34) as criteria of identity for fictional characters, shows that Everett has not demonstrated that the realist about fictional characters is committed to either contradictions or to indeterminate identities. That is, Everett has not shown that there is an in principle impossibility for the realist in providing criteria of identity which are consistent, and so unless Everett can show that the realist must adopt (25) rather than (32), (34), or some other criteria, his argument from indeterminate identity lapses.

As well as (25), Everett endorses

(35) If the world of a story concerns a creature *a*, and if *a* is not a real thing, then *a* is a fictional character.

In support of these two principles, (25) and (35), Everett (2005: 627) says that they

[66] Such a criterion is suggested as an alternative to (31) by Caplan and Muller (Forthcoming) in the course of motivating their own view, on which see below. Also see Howell (Forthcoming p. 30 n. 43)

> seem so fundamental to our conception of a fictional character I doubt very much that any account which rejected [either] would deserve to be counted as an account of fictional characters but should rather be regarded as an account of some other sort of entity. Moreover, our acceptance of many [claims involving fictional names] appears to result from our applying [(35)] and/or [(25)]. Thus, for example, I suspect that our intuitions that [(35)] is true are at least as strong as our intuitions that ['Raskolnikov is a fictional character'] is true and that we only judge [it] to be true because we accept [(35)] and take the world of Crime and Punishment to contain Raskolnikov. I would argue, then, that the fictional realist cannot reject [(35) or (25)] without thereby undermining our motivation for accepting fictional realism in the first place.

Note that Everett does not here, or anywhere else in his 2005, give an example of a fictional claim that is supported by (25). Perhaps the type of claims he has in mind are claims such as 'the fictional character Dr Watson and the fictional character Sherlock Holmes are distinct', and 'the fictional character Dr. Grumman and the fictional character Colonel Parry are identical' which, together with the obvious truths about the relevant fictions, follow from (25). But these claims can also be underwritten by (32) and (34) as well as by (25). That is, all three principles agree on the non-problematic cases, only coming apart when strange things happen with attributions of identity. So it is simply not clear that we are committed to (25) as opposed to (32) or (34), and so identity attributions in fiction pose no problem for the realist.

Still, the fact that there are multiple, competing consistent criteria of identity, as (32) and (34) attest, does present the realist with a question, namely which, if any, provides the correct criterion of identity for fictional characters? Providing an answer to this question is not needed to answer Everett's initial challenge from indeterminacy, however. So unless we think that uncontroversial principles of identity are required for the respectability of a type of entity, the fact that we have competing principles does not cause a problem for realism. But it might be argued that there is nothing that could settle the matter, and that choosing either (32) or (34) would be ad hoc. And this is precisely what Everett claims is the position of the realist who rejects (25), (although Everett is not addressing (32) or (34) explicitly). Commenting on a case similar to Bah Tale, he says that

> even if we block my arguments by rejecting [(35)] and [(25)], we still face the problem of deciding whether the Frick-character is the same as the Frack-character ... And there seems no principled way in which we might decide these questions. In each case we have no more reason to choose one of the options than the other and whatever choice we make will be unacceptably ad hoc. Hence, I would argue, simply rejecting [(35)] and [(25)] will not save the fictional realist (Everett 2005: 632-33).

Similarly, Howell (Forthcoming) and Caplan and Muller (Forthcoming) both think that to choose (32) over (34) or vice versa would be unacceptably ad hoc. So is there anything to be said for preferring one over the other?

Schneider and von Solodkoff support (32) by recourse to the following principle:

> Grounding. The nature (and identity) of fictional entities must be grounded in facts about their stories; unless the story provides sufficient grounds for the identity of an entity *x* and an entity *y*, no such identity is constituted.

But even if we accept Grounding this does not mean we should accept (32). As Schneider and von Solodkoff note

> *Bah Tale III* leaves us with a riddle concerning the identity of Bahrooh and Bahraah. We are puzzled by the question of whether the fictional Bahraah is, or is not, identical with the fictional Bahrooh. Because of this puzzlement *Bah Tale III* does not seem to provide sufficient grounds for the identity. So we think we should be driven back to the default option, which is the non-identity of the two fictional entities. Accordingly, we are willing to restrict [(32)] to consistent fictions, and to add a separate clause saying that inconsistent identity statements yield the non-identity of the fictional entities (Schnieder and von Solodkoff 2009: 148).

And what Schneider and von Solodkoff say about the puzzlement of Bah Tale III, we can equally well say about Bah Tale II, since we are working on the assumption that

indeterminate identity is metaphysically impossible. In any case, saying that inconsistent identity statements yield the non-identity of fictional characters, does not differ from the verdict that (32) provides on Bah Tale II: Bahrooh and Bahraah are not identical according to (32) since it is not the case that according to Bah Tale II that they are identical. So although adopting a different approach to inconsistent fictions, brings Schneider and von Solodkoff's treatment closer to that of (34) as they now agree on Bah tale III, (32) still gives a different verdict on identity questions than (34), since they disagree on Bah Tale II.

But Caplan and Muller (Forthcoming) argue that Grounding is no more plausible than the following principle:

> Grounding*: The nature (and distinctness) of fictional entities must be grounded in facts about their stories; unless the story provides sufficient grounds for the distinctness of an entity *x* and an entity *y*, no such distinctness is constituted

Grounding and Grounding* cannot both be true since this would mean that in the absence of the relevant facts about a story, x and y would both be identical and not identical which is impossible. So are there reasons for preferring Grounding over Grounding* or vice versa?

First, we should note that not all contexts are symmetric with respect to identity and non-identity. For, as is well known, the necessity of identity

> NI: $x=y \supset \Box x=y$

can be proved if we assume the modal axiom

> K: $\Box (P \supset Q) \supset (\Box P \supset \Box Q)$

with appropriate axioms governing identity, whereas the necessity of distinctness

> ND: $x\neq y \supset \Box x\neq y$

cannot (Williamson (1996a)). What is required in addition to K is the modal axiom

B: ~P ⊃ ~◊□P.[67]

The converses of both NI and ND follow if we assume the modal axiom

T: □P ⊃ P.

This shows that for a given operator, □, the principle

NI*: (x=y) ≡ (□ x=y)

can be derived in a weaker logic than the principle

ND*: (x≠y) ≡ (□ x≠y).

Now we should note that NI* is similar to (32) whereas the contrapositive of ND*, is similar to (34). So perhaps the asymmetry between our modal principles concerning identity carries over to an asymmetry between (32) and (34).

We can support this suggestion by noting that, in effect, (32) and (34) embed identity claims within epistemic contexts, contexts which are taken to be factive with respect to identity claims (at least in the consistent case). Because of this, we can read off identity facts from identity claims made within the story. But what we cannot do is read off identity facts from a lack of non-identity claims within a story. That is, where K is a knowledge operator, KP ⊃ P is valid, whereas ~K~P ⊃ P is invalid. So it seems as if Grounding is in better shape than Grounding*. More needs to be said given fictions which are inconsistent with respect to identity facts, but I think a case can be made for preferring Grounding over Grounding*.

Nevertheless, I think that we can see that none of the approaches above are adequate treatments to the identity of fictional characters, because we ought not to take identity claims embedded within story operators as factive. All of the approaches thus far assume that it is

[67] Williamson (1996a) also provides a proof of ND from NI using principles governing a rigidifying actuality operator instead of B, but we can safely ignore this in what follows.

identity and distinctness claims within a fiction which ground the identity and distinctness of fictional characters. But given the account of fictional characters sketched in the last chapter, it is really not obvious why this should be so, and so we need to look at the issue afresh.

As we have defined it, the constitutive claim of realism is that there are fictional characters. Everett's claims about indeterminacy do not follow from this realist principle. Similarly, the constitutive claims of creationism and authorial creationism do not entail the premises that Everett requires in order to raise the indeterminacy objection in the first place, nor the alternative principle suggested by Schneider and von Solodkoff. So Everett's challenge can only get started by attributing the creationist more than she need be committed to, and more than we embraced in Chapter 3.

Everett assumes the following ontological principle

(35) If the world of a story concerns a creature *a*, and if *a* is not a real thing, then *a* is a fictional character.

Without such a principle, it does not follow that for the creationist Bahrooh and Bahraah are fictional characters, let alone that the creationist is committed to any ontic indeterminacy. (35) does not allow that some fictional names correspond to no character, and so, it may be overly strong. The creationist could, perhaps, maintain that in writing stories similar to those above Everett has created no fictional character. But plausibly this is just an accident of the example. Suitably developed, the creationist would be committed to fictional characters such as Bahrooh and Bahraah. It will not do to simply deny that when we have these indeterminacy cases, there is no fictional character, since there can be as much reason to posit fictional characters in these cases as in others. In any case, we decided in Chapter 3 to adopt thin realism about fictional characters for convenience, so we must grant that the creationist is committed to (35).

Apart from the caveat just noted, (35) is a very weak realist claim since it does not say that there is a one to one correspondence between characters and names, and so it allows both that some fictional characters will correspond to multiple names and that some fictional characters correspond to no names, perhaps corresponding only to descriptions, demonstratives or pronouns. Further, note that the principle does not say that the name as used in the fiction

refers to the fictional character. This is the case on some creationist views, but not on the creationism defended here. More importantly, the principle is sufficiently weak that nothing follows from it concerning the identity conditions of fictional characters. So the bare ontological commitments of the creationist cannot lead to the worries about indeterminacy that Everett presses.

Neither does Everett's objection get a foothold from considering general principles concerning identity. Identity is the relation each thing has only to itself. Following Wiggins (2001) we offer no definition of identity, but rather elucidate it by providing constitutive conditions on the identity relation. First, it is constitutive of identity that it is an equivalence relation, that is, it conforms to the following three principles:

Reflexivity: $\forall x\ x=x$

Symmetry: $\forall x\ \forall y\ (x=y) \supset (y=x)$

Transitivity: $\forall x\ \forall y\ \forall z\ (x=y\ \&\ y=z) \supset (x=z)$

Second, again following Wiggins, we take it that identity conforms to the unrestricted version of

Leibnizian Community: $\forall x \forall y\ (x=y \equiv \forall F\ (Fx \equiv Fy))$

The right-to-left direction of *Leibnizian Community* is the identity of indiscernibles, which is trivial if 'F' is unrestricted, so as to include 'is identical with x'. The left-to-right direction yields

Leibniz's Law: $\forall x \forall y\ (x=y \rightarrow \forall F\ (Fx \equiv Fy))$

which is employed by Evans (1978) in his proof of the impossibility of indeterminate identity. Given that we are taking it that Leibnizian Community is constitutive of identity, it is not open to the realist about fictional characters to block Evans' and hence Everett's argument against realism by denying Leibniz's Law. In any case, as Wiggins puts it "How if

a is b could there be something true of the object *a* which was untrue of the object *b*? After all, they are the same object" (1967: 5).[68]

But Everett's claims of indeterminacy do not follow from these constitutive conditions on identity, nor from the combination of these conditions and creationist metaphysical and ontological commitments.

As we have seen both Everett and the consistent realist proposals discussed above accept that facts about the identity of fictional characters are grounded in facts about the relevant fictions. And they all accept that

(36) If an appropriate story says of two fictional characters *a* and *b*, that $a=b$ and does not say that $a\neq b$, or that it is indeterminate whether $a=b$, then $a=b$.

But as should be clear by now, this is not a commitment of either realism or creationism as we have construed it, nor a corollary of the metaphysics we outlined in Chapter 3. So what can be said in favour of (36) and should the creationist accept it? Note that we do not accept a generalized version of (36),

(37) If an appropriate story says of a fictional character *a* that *Fa* and does not say that *~Fa*, or that it is indeterminate whether *Fa*, then *Fa*

That is, we do not ordinarily think that it follows from it being true according to the Conan Doyle stories that Sherlock Holmes is a detective, that the corresponding fictional character is a detective. Moreover, not only is there no entailment, the claim that the fictional character is a detective is false. As has often been noted, being a detective is a concrete entailing property, in the sense that $\forall x\ (\lambda y.\ y \text{ is a detective } \langle x\rangle) \supset (\lambda z.\ z \text{ is concrete } \langle x\rangle)$.[69]

[68] Even if the realist were to reject Leibniz's Law, they would face the challenge that Wiggins presses against those who claim that identity is relative: if it is not Leibniz's Law that licenses the validity of the intersubstitutability *salva veritate* of x and y, where it is valid, then what principle does license this substitution?

[69] Some realists say that although no fictional characters *instantiate* the property of being a detective, some do *encode* this property, and more generally that (37) holds for encoding. But Evans' and hence Everett's arguments concern the instantiation of properties; there is no problem with a fictional object encoding the property of being indeterminately identical with itself.

It might be replied, however, that whereas no fictional object has a concrete entailing property, they do have properties which do not entail being concrete, such as being self-identical. Moreover, the realist might, despite not being a Meinongian, follow Parsons (1980) or Zalta (1998), and distinguish between two types of properties of fictional characters. Certain properties, such as being a detective, *characterize* a fictional character, whereas others, such as self-identity, *constitute* it. And we should only embrace principles like (37), for constituting properties.

But this response will not help save (37), since it is subject to counterexample. A story may say of a particularly well-crafted fictional character created by a Mr. Smith, that it is not well-crafted and not created by Mr. Smith. But it would not follow in this scenario, and indeed would not be true, that our character was not well-crafted and not created by Mr. Smith.

In general then, we do not export claims made within a fiction, to extra-fictional reality. It might be replied, however, that the creationist at least must accept that identity claims (and existence claims – see 2.2 below) are special since authors are responsible for the identity (and existence) of their fictional characters, according to creationism. This latter claim is true, but does not help the standing of (36). In addition to being in control of a character's identity (and existence), authors control whether their characters are well-crafted or not (assuming they have the requisite ability), which stories they appear in, and who created them. But this control is not exercised by making the corresponding claim within a story: we do not accept the pronouncement of a novel, if it says of itself that it is the novel *Ulysses* written by James Joyce! Indeed, Fargo opens with the words "This is a true story. The events depicted in this film took place in Minnesota in 1987. At the request of the survivors, the names have been changed. Out of respect for the dead, the rest has been told exactly as it occurred." But as the Coens have admitted, this is not true.[70] [71]

Schneider and Solodkoff (2009: 139) note that "It is hard to see what truths in a fiction might ground the identity or non-identity of fictional entities, if not truths about identity". But the

[70] http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1499898/rewind-separating-fact-from-cinematic-fiction.jhtml

[71] None of this is to deny that authors can control the properties of their fictions and fictional characters by making claims within a story, but only that they do not do so by making the corresponding claim within a story. An author makes a novel interesting or complicated by the claims made within the story, but not by saying 'this story is interesting/complex'.

creationist can agree with this, arguing that the identity and non-identity of fictional characters are grounded by truths *about* fiction not truths *in* a fiction.

Some account like this is needed to account for true inter-fictional identity claims such as that the Odysseus of *Odyssey* and the Ulysses of Tennyson's *Ulysses* are the same fictional character. Appealing to truths within the relevant fictions will not ground this identity claim since neither is it the case that according to the Odyssey, Ulysses is Odysseus nor according to the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* (combined), Ulysses is Odysseus.

One might think that what determines the identity of fictional characters is the intention of the author; the fictional character *a* = the fictional character *b* iff an author intends for the fictional character *a* to be identical to the fictional character *b*. And presumably, an author's intentions are usually reflected by the relevant truths in fiction, although this need not be the case. But we should note that authors do not always control the identity of their creations in this way. As Caplan and Muller (Forthcoming) note, an author might not intend either that $a=b$ nor that $a\neq b$, indeed, not having a grip on the Evans proof, they might intend the impossible, namely that *a* to be indeterminately identical to *b*.

But regardless of whether an author has an intention for two characters to be the same, he may do something intentionally which means that they are identical or distinct. As we argued in Chapter 3, what is important for the identity of abstract individuals is proper reproduction. If an author reproduces an existing fiction, he does not create a fiction, but rather the fiction he produces is identical to some pre-existing fiction. It is only when an author entertains or expresses a sequence of propositions in the way characteristic of fiction, which are not the result of proper reproduction of an existing fiction, that he creates a new fiction. And the same goes for fictional characters.

The creationist might propose the following criterion of identity for fictional characters

(38) $a=b$ iff *a* results from the same creative act that *b* results from.

But whilst the left-to-right direction of (38) is fine, the right-to-left direction is suspect. This is because an author might take an existing fictional character and split it into two. This

single creative act would then result in two distinct fictional characters, thus showing that sameness of creative act is not sufficient or identity. The creationist could instead try

(39) For all fictional characters x, y, x=y iff for some tokens u and v, u is an instance of x and v is an instance of y, and either u is reproduced properly from a chain containing v, or v is reproduced properly from a chain containing u

Unfortunately, this won't do for the initial introduction of a fictional character. Such a character when initially created is not a reproduction of anything, but is self-identical. I do not propose to try to refine (39) in order to provide a counterexample-free criterion of identity. We have already said enough to show that the worry that Everett raises is not well-founded. The facts that ground the identity and persistence of fictional characters will be facts concerning the fiction and the creative process. At least assuming thin realism what a fiction says about the identity of its characters does not determine when and how they are created, and so do not determine their identity in the way that Everett and his interlocutors imagine. Of course, if there are substantive constitutive conditions on the creation of fictional characters, then perhaps truths within the fiction do bear upon how and when fictional characters are created. But even on such a picture this will not be in the straightforward manner presupposed above. In any case, it cannot be that indeterminate identity claims within a fiction lead to the creation of an indeterminate number of fictional characters. At best such facts might lead to the constitutive conditions for the creation of a fictional character not being satisfied.

Now that we have seen why Everett's challenges to realism concerning the identity of fictional characters fails, we can quickly discuss the two remaining types of indeterminacy advertised at the beginning of section 2, starting with Everett's challenge from indeterminate existence.

2.2 Indeterminacy of Existence

> Consider Tatyana Tolstaya's recent novel *The Slynx*. Now in the end, I think, it is pretty much left open whether or not there really is a Slynx in Tolstaya's novel. It seems to be an indeterminate matter as to whether the world of that novel contains a Slynx. But then, given [(35)], it follows that it

> is an indeterminate matter as to whether there is such a fictional creature as the Slynx (Everett 2005: 630).

Just as with (25), Everett wants (35) to preserve indeterminacy (2005:630 n15). There are three points to note about the details of Everett's presentation. First, because (35) is a conditional not a biconditional, nothing whatsoever follows from it given *The Slynx*. (35) tells us what is the case if a novel concerns *a*, but not what follows if it does not concern *a* or if it is indeterminate whether a novel concerns *a*. What Everett should have appealed to is the biconditional version of (35):

(40) The world of a story concerns a non-real thing *a* iff *a* is a fictional character.

Second, we have already given reason to reject both directions of (40). The right-to-left direction is undermined by the creation of fictional characters outside of fictions, who are never used in fictions, as the case of Jerry Cornelius discussed in Chapter 3 shows. The left-to-right direction is subject to counterexample if we abandon thin realism, and say that there is more to creating a fictional character than pretend reference. In any case, let's leave these objections to one side.

Third, just as in the case of indeterminate identity, what Everett's example shows is that a story can leave something open, but this is not the kind of indeterminacy which, if transmitted by (40) yields any problems for the realist. So in fact what Everett needs is

(41) If it is left-open whether in the world of a story there is a thing *a*, then it is indeterminate whether there is a fictional character *a*.

But this is not supported by (35). Nevertheless, as Schneider and Soldokoff note, the realist still has to decide whether there is the fictional creature the Slynx or not. Now Schneider and Soldokoff take it for granted that according to *The Slynx* either the Slynx is a creature living in the woods or the Slynx is a mythical creature, and so either way, according to *The Slynx* there is a Slynx. But this is not true. Of course there could be stories which leave it open whether an entity is concrete or abstract, but this is not what *The Slynx* is doing, it is leaving it open whether there is a Slynx or not: saying the Slynx might be mythical is a way of saying that it does not exist. It only follows that according to *The Slynx* the Slynx exists, if realism

about mythical characters is true according to the story, but this cannot simply be assumed. So the realist cannot simply appeal to claims about what is true in the story to ground what is true in reality in the way in which Schneider and von Solodkoff do. But as we saw above, she need not. Whether or not there is a fictional character corresponding to the Slynx of the story, is determined by whether or not the author created one, and not by claims of existence within the story.

So we can see that the challenges raised by Everett based on indeterminacies within fictions do not undermine realism in the slightest. So there is no need, as one prominent realist has, to withdraw from the ontological and metaphysical elements of the default view. Howell was simply incorrect to think that Everett's challenges "are fundamental problems that appear to show that [Howell's form of] realism is untenable" (2010: 161).

2.3 Indeterminacy of Number

There is a final type of indeterminacy regarding fictional characters not pressed by Everett (2005), although it is mentioned in passing by Kroon and Voltolini (2011) and discussed by Schneider and von Solodkoff (2009). Consider the following hypothetical cases, which could have been extracts from works of fiction

(42) As I approached the bridge, I saw some men. I decided to play it safe and turn back.
(43) Lord Merlington gathered an army of over ten thousand to attack the township.
(44) Only one of Jake's brothers could be said to be tall. The others were all under 5ft 7.

In each of these examples, a fiction talks about an indefinite number of people. But there cannot be a corresponding indefinite number of fictional characters in reality. A fiction can leave it open how many brothers Jake has, but the world cannot leave it open how many fictional characters there are corresponding to Jake's brothers, or so the thought goes.

The realist has three options in these cases: (i) there is no fictional character, (ii) there is a single fictional character, or (iii) there are multiple fictional characters. Of course, the realist need not give the same answer in each case. Faced with such cases Schneider and von Solodkoff conclude that the realist

had better withdraw from admitting fictional Fs merely because some story has it that there are Fs. What is needed for a fictional entity to exist is not just any general existential claim within a story, but some more specific one: the story must contain *quasi*-reference to an individual entity, for a corresponding fictional entity to exist. Such a *quasi*-reference can be achieved by the use of a proper name, a definite description, or some other device that is in non-fictional contexts suitable for the introduction of a particular object into discourse. Whether a story involves *quasi*-reference to some object is to be settled by the best interpretation of the story.

So we can now state our proposal about the existence-conditions for fictional entities:

Existence. If a story *T* involves *quasi*-reference to an entity *a*, which is neither a real thing nor a fictional entity originating in another story, then the fictional entity *a* exists (because of *T*).

A final note: the fictional realist may still say that *some* fictional entities exist because of non-specific existential statements within stories. But not (a) fictional species-member(s), but rather a *fictional species* itself or, alternatively, a *fictional group*. Just as there are fictional characters, corkscrews and countries, there can be fictional kinds, species and groups. These are *not* kinds, species and groups, and they do not *have* instances or members (Schneider and Solodkoff 2009: 147).

Schneider and Solodkoff's answer is fine, as far as it goes but it gets things wrong in an important way. It is not quasi-reference per se that leads to the creation of fictional characters, since characters can be created outside of fictions with no quasi-reference (see below). So once again, we need to take home the lesson that we cannot read off our ontology from claims within a fiction, or even from quasi-reference within a fiction. The number of fictional characters in a fiction depends on the creative acts of authors. These will often go hand-in-hand with quasi-reference within a fiction, but not invariably so.

So we can see that indeterminacy, in any of the forms we have considered, does not threaten realism about fictional characters.

3. Brock's Argument Against Authorial Creationism

Brock's argument against creationism neither rests on controversial claims about non-concrete objects, nor about the indeterminacy of fictional characters. Rather, Brock (2010: 342) argues directly against the characteristic creationist claim that fictional characters are created (by authors). Regardless of whether or not fictional characters have a spatial location

> if fictional objects are created, they *do* have a temporal location, and, in particular, there must be a moment at which the character comes into existence for the first time. One problem for the abstract creationist, then, is specifying *when* fictional characters are brought into existence by their author. When, exactly, does life begin for a fictional character? (Brock 2010: 355)

One might think that the same worry arises for concrete artefacts as Brock concedes:

> Answering questions about the first moment of a contingent entity's existence is difficult for philosophers of every stripe. This is true even when considering paradigmatically concrete objects. … Metaphysicians worry about when a statue comes into existence. Does it come into existence at the same time as the lump of clay from which it is composed? If so, why do we say the artist created the statue from the lump of clay? If not, does this show that two different objects—a lump of clay and a statue—can occupy the same region of space-time? (Brock 2010: 355-356)

If this is correct, then although there is a question for creationism about fictional characters, there is not an *especial* problem here, unless we are happy to deny the existence of complex

concrete objects on the same basis, and I am here assuming that we are not.[72] But Brock thinks this is not the correct way to look at things:

> But it is important to realize that the difficulties expressed here [in the case of complex concrete objects] aren't really problems about *how* such entities are created. They are instead worries about the nature and identity conditions of such individuals. Once we have determined what it is for something to be a person, and once we have accounted for any differences between a statue and a lump of clay, there will be no further mystery about when such individuals come into existence for the first time. The same cannot be said for fictional characters if they are indeed abstract artefacts (Brock 2010: 356 my emphasis).

But here Brock seems to be changing the question. The initial problem Brock poses for the creationist is to specify *when* a fictional character comes into existence. And this problem has parallels in other metaphysical discussions. Brock responds by saying that in the case of fictional characters, but not in the case of concrete objects, there is a further how-question: how are fictional characters created?

Brock claims that creationists are either silent on the question of how fictional characters are created, or else follow John Searle's account (1974-75: 73): "By pretending to refer to people [better: objects] and to recount events about them, the author creates fictional characters and events." So here we see that Searle provides an answer to Brock's how-question. But Brock argues that Searle's answer is unsatisfactory because it conflicts with commonsense. Brock thinks that no matter how we understand Searle's notion of pretend reference, Seale's answer to the how-question allows us to infer *when* a fictional character is created, and that any of these inferred answers to the when-question conflict with common sense.

In order for Brock to substantiate his claim that there is a disanalogy between concrete objects and fictional characters, the same argumentative strategy would need to fail in the case of any concrete objects we are willing to countenance. But Brock has not shown or even attempted to show this. Moreover, it is far from clear that this argumentative strategy does

[72] Infamously, Unger (1979), van Inwagen (1990) and Merricks (2001) do deny the existence of (some) complex concrete objects.

not generalize. For example, 'via certain biological processes' is not an implausible answer to the how-question 'how do people come into existence?' But when we try to be more precise about what we mean, we run into trouble. If we say that the relevant biological process is the one where a sperm fertilizes an egg, we give up on psychological persistence conditions for people which seem very natural in the face of Lockean thought experiments. On the other hand, if we say that the relevant biological process is one which invariably leads to consciousness, then we have to deny the commonsense claim that I was once an embryo, since some embryos never develop into conscious creatures. The difficulties in precisifying our answer to the how-question in the case of the personal identity debate, and the problems with the inferred answers to the when-question, does not lead us to reject the existence of people. So despite Brock's protestations, it has not been established that there is an asymmetry here between fictional characters and objects that both irrealists and realists about fictional characters are happy to admit into our ontology. In any case, for the purposes of argument, I shall assume that the creationist should, or at least would be in a much better position if she could respond to Brock's argument.

Before considering Brock's argument in detail, we should pause to note immediately that it fails to establish its advertised conclusion. Brock argues that "if there are fictional characters, they are not created by authors" (2010: 342) and that "The basic idea is that no matter how the creationist identifies where, when, and how fictional objects are created, the proposal conflicts with other strong intuitions we have about fictional characters" (Brock 2010: 339). But Brock is not entitled to his conclusion. This is because Brock argues for his claim by considering only three answers to the following question: what is pretend reference and which acts of it count in answering the how-question? But Brock has done nothing to establish that the three accounts of pretend reference he considers are the only plausible options for the creationist. Without this, Brock's argument by elimination simply does not establish his conclusion. Rather what Brock has shown, at best, is that three ways of answering the above how-question fail, in virtue of the inferred answer to the when-question. We should see Brock's argument, therefore, not as a knock-down argument against creationism, but rather as a request for more information from the creationist. If we agree with Brock that the creation of fictional characters is a mysterious affair, we should view Brock's discussion as posing an explanatory challenge to the creationist. But there is no in-principle impossibility to creationism established by Brock. And, as Brock himself notes, the

realist should not be overly concerned with Yagisawa's argument that realists about fictional characters cannot account for fictional negative existentials, as

> Yagisawa has found fault with two popular ways to paraphrase negative existential claims. But, for all Yagisawa has said, there may be other more acceptable paraphrases available to the creationist (Brock 2010: 345).

But what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

In any case, let us focus on Brock's discussion of the three potential precisifications of pretend reference that he considers. Then we shall be in a better position to tell whether there is anything to Brock's contention that the creationist faces a problem in answering the how-question.

The first answer Brock considers is that the pertinent notion of pretend reference occurs whenever an author uses a fictional name within a fiction. The problem with this answer, Brock thinks, is that it overgenerates fictional characters. For example, not only would a fictional character be created when Conan Doyle first introduces Sherlock Holmes, there would also be a fictional character created on each subsequent use of 'Holmes' by Conan Doyle. As Brock (2010: 357) puts it "Presumably no one would want to say that he [Conan Doyle] created a new fictional character each time he [pretended to refer using the name 'Holmes']. The account must therefore be rejected."

Brock is correct that this suggestion intuitively overgenerates, although it is not clear how much of a problem this overgeneration is *per se*. Of course, we do not always track these other Sherlock Holmes characters, but perhaps they are none the worse for that (cf. Lewis (1986) on universalists regarding composition). Moreover, it seems that we often do want to distinguish between various Sherlock Holmes's: the Holmes of a *Study in Scarlet*, the post-Reichenbach Falls Holmes, the Holmes of the canonical works. The proposal under consideration might be thought to allow for this possibility. As long as the creationist has an abstract artefact that allows her to straightforwardly account for sentences such as

(45) Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes in 1887

she might think that this is good enough. If she has additional Holmes characters too, this is unexpected, but perhaps not that damaging.

If the creationist were to take this route, it would be something of a cost. But in addition to an unintuitively large ontology, this response needs to account for the fact that we need a single Holmes character which corresponds to all the uses of the name 'Holmes' by Conan Doyle. That is, as well as accounting for the truth of (45), the creationist needs a Sherlock Holmes character to account for the truth of

(46) Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes in 1887 and continued to develop him until 1927.

which intuitively requires that there be a single Holmes character developing over those forty years.[73] Now it is consistent with this desideratum that whenever Conan Doyle uses 'Holmes' he creates an additional character, but this would be a strange view. Even if the creationist can explain away the overgeneration problem, he has to provide an account of how it is that all uses of a denotational expression create a fictional character, whilst still corresponding to a more all-encompassing character which accounts for the truth of sentences like (46). Furthermore, if we have an explanation of how the various uses of 'Holmes' correspond to a single character, then we shall likely have a response to Brock's how-question. And although, as mentioned above, we do often distinguish between various Holmes characters, these do not appear to correspond to the plethora of Holmes characters created on this view.

In addition to this overgeneration problem, the current proposal also faces an undergeneration problem, since, as we have seen, it seems that some fictional characters are introduced not by names but by other potential denoting expressions such as demonstratives, pronouns and descriptions. Indeed, some fictional characters are nameless.[74] The obvious fix to the undergeneration problem is to allow all denoting phrases into the account and not to privilege names. But Brock (2010: 359) counsels against this move since, although this amendment solves the undergeneration problem, it does so only by making the overgeneration problem worse.

[73] Appearances here can be deceptive, however. As we shall see in Chapter 5, anaphoric dependence of the kind exhibited in (46) does not require co-reference. Still it is not clear that denying co-reference in this case allows us to account for the truth of (46).
[74] For example, the lead character in Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*.

In order to avoid such massive overgeneration perhaps we should say that not every use of a name by an author pretending to refer creates a fictional character, but only that the first such use of a name does. This is the second answer that Brock considers. But Brock rejects this answer as it still overgenerates fictional characters, albeit not on the scale of the previous proposal. For example, this proposal has it that in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* we have two fictional characters – Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde – whereas Brock thinks intuitively there is only one. Brock, then, thinks that the creationist must look for another account.

Whatever we want to say about the Jekyll and Hyde case in particular, Brock is surely correct that there is an overgeneration problem, as an author can use distinct expressions for the same character, for instance by pretendedly referring to the same person. The problem ramifies once we allow for expressions other than names to be used by authors to pretendedly refer, which we need to do in order to avoid the undergeneration problem noted above. (Whether we have the converse problem of 'the same name' being used to pretendedly refer to distinct people depends on how we individuate names).

Now a realist of a certain stripe could respond to Brock as follows. "[T]he author is only pretending to refer on the first occasion of utterance; every subsequent use involves a genuine case of reference to the fictional character created at an earlier time" (Brock 2010: 357). The suggestion is that when Stevenson pretendedly refers, using 'Jekyll' for the first time, he creates a fictional character, but subsequent uses of 'Jekyll' simply refer to the fictional character and since these are acts of reference and not of pretend reference they do not generate further fictional characters. Moreover, uses of distinct words, such as 'Hyde', only result in further fictional characters when they are used in an act of pretend reference, not when they are used to refer to pre-existing fictional characters.

We have already committed to rejecting this response, however; on our account an author's use of a fictional name within the scope of a fiction fails to refer to a fictional character (except in special circumstances).[75] In any case, as we have stressed, it is not plausible that authors are, as a matter of course, referring to their creations in their storytelling. This is what

[75] See the discussion of how a fictional character gets into a fiction in Chapter 3 and our discussion of Everett's case of πιγλετ in Chapter 6.

Sainsbury (2009: 122) gets right when he says that this type of realist conflates a representative vehicle with what is represented. Fictional characters conceived of as abstract artefacts represent, but what an author writes about is what is represented. (What's more, as we shall see in Chapter 6, such realist accounts have trouble with accounting for singular negative existentials). So we must agree with Brock that this second suggestion for which acts of pretend reference create fictional characters is to be rejected.

The third answer Brock considers is that a fictional character is created whenever an author intends to create a new fictional character and pretends to refer to it or otherwise uniquely identify it. But Brock provides three types of putative counterexample to this proposal.

Brock's first objection to this account is that it undergenerates. To show this, Brock presents a case which he thinks contains no act of pretend reference, on this third construal, but where intuitively there are many characters by the realist's lights. Brock asks us to consider an author who not only does not believe in abstract objects – she is a nominalist – but also abhors the idea of abstract objects. So when she writes stories she neither intends to bring into being nor believes that she is bringing into being abstract fictional characters. But if the creationist is correct, then she *is* bringing into being such abstract objects. If so, the current suggestion cannot be correct since we have fictional characters being created without the appropriate intention.

Brock considers the following objection to this case

> The existence of fictional characters supervenes in a complex way upon the intentional states of the author and the work of fiction he or she creates. We cannot at present give a precise account of when and how a fictional character comes into being. But this is true for many other entities whose existence we accept and which we take to be created in virtue of changes to the domain upon which their existence supervenes. So, for example, some nations and universities are founded at distinct times by declarations or charters, but others arise gradually, as people come together in certain complex relationships that are difficult to articulate. The point is well taken. But *I suspect* the problem of specifying precisely when and how universities, nations, and other social institutions are created derives from the fact that the terms used to pick them

> out are both ambiguous and vague. ... *My suspicion* is that once these sources of ambiguity and vagueness are resolved, there will be no remaining mystery about when and how such social institutions are created. The same is not true of fictional characters (2010: 362-363 n12 my emphasis).

But Brock offers nothing more than his suspicion that there is a disanalogy between fictional characters and other abstract artefacts.

Now we can accept that an author may create a fictional character without having a transparent intention to create a fictional character, that is, they may create a fictional character when they could rationally reject the claim that they intended to create a fictional character. But this does not mean that he does not intend to create a fictional character in the sense of doing something intentionally which creates a fictional character. But this raises the question of what it is that authors intentionally do that creates fictional characters?

So Brock has considered three answers to the how-question and has rejected them all because they given unsatisfactory answers to the when-question. That is, they all provide answers to the when-question which undergenerate fictional characters, overgenerate fictional characters or both. But as I mentioned at the outset this is not enough to secure Brock's conclusion. Indeed, the creationist can provide an answer to the when-question which avoids the problems that beset the answers above. I shall now lay out this answer before considering Brock's other two putative counterexamples to the answer to the how-question just rejected, as these are of independent interest.

At the outset, we should note that we can ask Brock's questions with respect to novels and other repeatable artworks as well as with respect to fictional characters. For example, we can ask: how are fictions created?; when are fictions created?

An obviously unsatisfactory answer to these questions is the following: novels are created every time an author entertains or expresses a proposition. This answer will not do because it would expand the domain of fiction to encompass serious assertion. Although entertaining / expressing a proposition is necessary for the creation of a literary fiction, it is not sufficient. There is something peculiar about fiction which sets it apart from, say, science.

What seems important in the case of storytelling is that the author has the relevant attitude of pretence: a fiction is created when an author considers or puts forward propositions in a certain way, in an act of storytelling. But a fiction isn't created whenever an author does this. An author does not create a new fiction whenever he tells a story, for sometimes he *re-tells* a story. What we need is some way of distinguishing the telling of new stories, which constitute a creative act, from the re-telling of old stories which do not. Similarly, an author does not create a fictional character every time he uses a name corresponding to a fictional character, for sometimes the name corresponds to a pre-existing fictional character.

In the case of fictions we might propose the following answer to the how-question: a fiction is created when and only when an author considers or puts forward propositions in a certain way, in an act of storytelling, for the first time. But this answer cannot be correct for two reasons. Firstly, Author B may re-tell Author A's story, but he has not thereby created a new fiction. This is not to deny that Author B could put forward exactly the propositions Author A did, in exactly the same order and thereby create a fiction – the identity of qualitative indiscernibles does not hold for fictions. Second, Author A could, improbably, put forward the same propositions in exactly the same order, as he has done before without re-telling his earlier story. This would be the case when Author A suffered from severe amnesia and the qualitative identity of the two stories was sheer coincidence.

So in general we distinguish between the re-telling of a story and the telling of a qualitatively identical one, and this distinction cannot be captured by the novelty of the collection of propositions put forward. Rather, the difference between the telling of a story for the first time and the re-telling of a story lies in the idea of reproduction. When we re-tell a story, whether we authored the story or not, we take a certain story as an input which we process and then give *that* input story as an output. This process of reproduction is an everyday one. For instance, when I report what someone else said. But when we tell a story for the first time we do not reproduce something. This is not to deny that there are inputs which are processed that result in a story, but only denies that in this case the inputs are identical to the output. So an author creates a fiction whenever he puts forward some propositions in an act of pretence characteristic of storytelling, where he is not properly reproducing some pre-existing fiction.

Similarly, when I re-tell a Holmes story, I do not create a new fictional character every time I use the word Holmes. I am simply utilising a pre-existing story and characters. But to note all

of this is not yet to provide an answer to Brock's questions. For we have not yet considered intra-fictional uses of fictional names, and so have not given an answer to the when question. Moreover, we have not addressed Brock's how-question.

Now just as author can modify a story, an author can modify a fictional character. And this is what happens whenever an author pretends to refer using a name corresponding to a fictional character already created. As the Holmes' stories unfold we learn more and more about Holmes, and as such the fictional character Holmes changes, he becomes more well-developed. And just as other artefacts need not have had the life that they had, the character Holmes, the abstract object, need not have had the life it had. If Conan Doyle had not brought back Holmes after the Reichenbach falls, this character would have still been Holmes, albeit with different properties from the ones it in fact has. Such modal variation in properties is not mysterious. The properties of an artefact, we ordinarily think, are neither temporally or modally rigid. So as well as reproducing artworks, authors can change them too. So we can say, at least to a first approximation, that an act of pretend reference is creative iff an author pretends to refer to an object and in doing so is not thereby reproducing or modifying an existing fictional character.

Now we might worry that the above account in terms of pretend reference cannot be complete for three reasons. First, an author can create a fictional character before writing a story, and perhaps in such cases there need not be pretend reference. An author, seeing the success of the Harry Potter stories might think I need to write a story about a wizard and then jot down a series of characteristics for his wizard. This process seems as if it could be sufficient for creating a fictional character and also that there need be no pretend reference: the act of thinking I need to write a story about a wizard no more involves pretend reference than does thinking I want a sloop.

Second, an author may, in telling a story pretendedly refer in passing, never re-using the name. If thick realism about fictional characters is true, then this is not sufficient for the creation of a fictional character.

Finally, in the Sherlock Holmes stories Watson is (usually) the narrator. It seems here that it is Watson who appears to make reference to Sherlock Holmes, Moriarty and the Baker Street Irregulars. Conan Doyle's apparently referential acts are, in the first instance at least, to

Watson. Of course, there is no Watson who is pretending to refer to Holmes but the case still raises the question of whether Conan Doyle was pretending to refer to Holmes when he pretended to refer to Watson whom he pretended referred to Holmes? The fact that Watson does not exist is incidental to the case. In telling a story an author may refer to a real person whom she pretends referred to someone, someone who in fact did not exist. But it is not clear that the storyteller thereby pretends to refer to someone who does, in fact, not exist. If I say that Quine said quotation has a certain anomalous character, then it does not follow that, in the relevant sense, I said that quotation has a certain anomalous character. So saying that is not transitive or transparent in this way. By the same token it might be thought that if Conan Doyle pretends to refer to Watson, who, as part of the pretence, refers to Holmes, it does not follow that Conan Doyle pretended to refer to Holmes.[76]

In the light of these difficulties, I do not wish to provide a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for how a fictional character is created. But despite not providing a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, we can allay Brock's fears as set out above. Uses of 'Holmes' by Conan Doyle after Holmes has been created do not create a new character since, presumably, this was a reidentifying use by Conan Doyle, in the sense that he was pretendedly referring to the same man that he did on his first use of 'Holmes' and thereby modifying his pre-existing fictional character. Similarly for distinct names which are pretendedly co-referential with Holmes. Whether or not Conan Doyle's first use of 'Holmes' created a fictional character depends upon the details of the genesis of Holmes. Had Conan Doyle created Holmes before he named him? And whether there is more to the creation of a fictional character than the pretend reference? In the first case, the first use of 'Holmes' was not a creative act either, but rather was a modifying act, one in which Conan Doyle provides a name for his fictional character. In the second case, there is no Holmes until the constitutive conditions of creation have been satisfied. But whatever the details of the case, Brock's concerns are met. There is neither overgeneration nor undergeneration here, nor is a specific realist intention required of Conan Doyle.

As I mentioned above, Brock offered three objections to the 'appropriate intention' creationist account, only one of which has been discussed. The other putative

[76] Perhaps Conan Doyle is pretending that he is Watson and is thereby pretending that he is referring to Holmes. But this need not have been the case.

counterexamples are of interest even once we have jettisoned that account in favour of the current proper reproduction account. So let us see if the current account can meet Brock's remaining objections.

Brock asks us to consider a case where there is a single act of pretend reference but where intuitively there are two fictional characters. Brock's thought experiment concerns a situation where Conan Doyle intended to write a fifth Holmes novel, *The Strange Case of Dr. Watson and Mr. Holmes*, in which he would reveal that Watson and Holmes are one and the same. But before commencing work on the novel, Conan Doyle dies. The problem this case raises for the 'appropriate intention' creationist account is that this answer rules that there is a single fictional character, Holmes-Watson, whereas, Brock claims, intuitively Holmes and Watson are two distinct fictional characters.

As he gives it, Brock's case is underspecified. Brock could mean that Conan Doyle's intention had been all along, that Holmes and Watson were one and the same. In this case, then after the creation of the character, all subsequent uses of 'Holmes' or 'Watson' would be pretendedly referring to the same man, although it would not seem that way to the reader. On the other hand Brock could mean that it was only once Conan Doyle had created Holmes and Watson, that he hit upon the idea that they were one and the same.

I think what Brock has in mind is the first spelling-out, as the second spelling-out is structurally identical to a case of Brock's that we discuss below. Brock's case then should be read as Conan Doyle having the intention all along that Holmes and Watson were one and the same. But if this is the case, then surely it is intuitive that there is a single character. Conan Doyle creates a single character with two names just as we are assuming (see above) Stevenson in fact did with Jekyll-Hyde. The only difference is that Stevenson revealed this fact and Brock's counterfactual Conan Doyle did not have the chance to. But why should this make any difference?

One reason for joining Brock in thinking that there are in fact two characters is that we have been presented with what *appear* to be two distinct characters, since nowhere are we told that Watson is Holmes. But we cannot draw a *metaphysical* conclusion from this *epistemic* fact as our discussion of Everett's cases of indeterminate identity show. And this is something that we know independently of considerations to do with the metaphysics of fiction. Consider, for

example, Frege's puzzle. The Ancients were presented with what they took to be two distinct heavenly bodies, and they thought of these bodies as distinct. But this epistemic fact belies the astronomical one that there is in fact only one heavenly body, namely Venus. Someone who was in the state of knowledge of the Ancients would have two mental files, one for Hesperus and one for Phosphorus. Upon learning the relevant celestial facts, however, they would merge these files into a single mental file concerning Venus. So we can explain any intuition that we might have that Watson and Holmes are distinct, as simply reflecting our relatively impoverished epistemic state. Moreover, once we learn about Conan Doyle's intention it is clear, I think, that we do think of Holmes and Watson as the same character, although in the actual novels of Conan Doyle, it seems as if Conan Doyle is writing about two distinct men, just as at the beginning of Stevenson's novel, it seems as if he is writing about two distinct men.

If the following supervenience claim were correct

(47) Facts about fictional characters supervene on facts about the stories in which they appear,

then Brock would be right in thinking that there is a problem for the creationist. The question then is whether (47) is correct? One reason for thinking not is that it seems that fictional characters can be created before there are any stories about them, as our discussion of Jerry Cornelius showed. So on its face (47) seems false and we have given no reason to believe it. It seems then that Brock's putative counterexample lapses and the creationist will not be moved by it. This leaves Brock with one final allegedly problematic case for the creationist.

Brock imagines a case where he thinks we have two appropriate acts of pretend reference but intuitively only one character. Of course, we have abandoned a creationist account purely in terms of pretend reference, but Brock's point carries over to the present proposal: we have two creative acts but intuitively, Brock thinks, a single character. Brock's case is as follows. When initially writing *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Brock has it that Stevenson had Jekyll and Hyde as distinct characters, that is, there were two creative acts. But later Stevenson amends the last two chapters of the story giving us the version we know where Dr. Jekyll is Mr. Hyde. Brock thinks that the appropriate intention view is committed

to the claim that Stevenson created two fictional characters but intuitively, Brock claims, there is just one, since Dr Jekyll is Mr Hyde.

Presumably, Brock thinks there is a single fictional character here because it is true according to the fiction that Dr Jekyll is Mr Hyde. And this truth in fiction allows us to infer a truth about fictional characters in extra-fictional reality. But as we have seen already in our discussion of Everett's claims of indeterminacy, we do not generally read off facts about fictional characters from truths in fiction. There are truths about Jekyll and Hyde according to Stevenson's novel that are not true of the fictional characters Jekyll and Hyde. Further, as we argued above there is no reason to think that identity facts are privileged in this way. What is relevant to the identity of Stevenson's fictional characters are not the identity claims embedded within a fiction, but the creative acts of Stevenson. So it is simply not clear that in Brock's case, Stevenson's creation Jekyll is identical to Stevenson's creation Hyde, since such facts are not transparent. Any intuition we have that Jekyll is Hyde can be explained by the truth in fiction that Jekyll is Hyde. So, prima facie, Brock's case poses no more of a threat to creationism than Everett's cases of indeterminate identity.

But there is a way of reading Brock's case that is of more interest. One obvious response to Brock's case is to reply that Stevenson amalgamates the two characters in the final two chapters. In this case there are three creationary acts - the initial creation of the Hyde character, the initial creation of the Jekyll character, and then the fusion of these two characters, into a third, distinct character. Brock, however, thinks this is counterintuitive: "we don't suppose that Stevenson created two characters and then in a further creative act fused the two into one" (2010: 361).[77]

Before assessing Brock's claim, we should distinguish between two versions of the response. The first version has it that Stevenson created two distinct characters at time t1 and then fused these characters at time t2 so that they become identical. On such a view, the fictional

[77] Brock (2010: 361) continues "We don't suppose that Stevenson created two characters and ascribed to these distinct individuals the impossible property of being identical to one another". On the version of creationism endorsed here, the sense of 'fictional character' in which Stevenson created fictional characters is not the sense in which he ascribes properties to fictional characters. But this aside, as the discussion of Everett above shows, there is no incoherence in Stevenson saying that Jekyll is Hyde even if the fictional characters are distinct. Stevenson is pretending that these two men are identical, just as an author may pretend that Napoleon is Charlemagne. But whether these identities hold in extra-fictional reality is not determined in a straightforward way by the corresponding truths in fiction.

characters are temporarily (non-)identical. The coherence of such a view has been defended by both endurantists (Gallois: 1998) and perdurantists (Lewis: 1986). But one need not appeal to such a revisionary metaphysics in order to make sense of the fusion response to Brock. The second version of this response has it that Stevenson created two fictional characters and then fused them into one, thereby creating a third, distinct, fictional character. This version of the response requires no appeal to temporary identity.

In any case, whichever version of the fusion response we plump for, it is not at all clear that the fusion response is counterintuitive in the way Brock suggestions. We are familiar with cases of fusion in other domains. For example, we can take two equally sized balls of clay and press them together with our hands until they form a single, distinct, ball of clay; or we take two trains of carriages and fuse them into a single, distinct train of carriages; or we can take three crowns and form them into a distinct fourth crown. And here, just as with Stevenson fusing two fictional characters to form a third, we are taking entities of type F and fusing them together to make another entity of type F. (Of course this is not essential to such fusions. We could take a spoon and a knife and fuse them together to make a double-ended piece of cutlery; or some portions of food stuffs to make a cake-mix). So there is nothing objectionable in principle to such cases of fusion.

Moving closer to the present case, we would, I think, say that artworks such as novels, novel chapters, pieces of music, films and the like, were fused in analogous situations. Indeed as Brock himself notes

> it appears the novel [*Middlemarch*] resulted from Eliot fusing (at least) two partly written stories she had originally conceived of as independent works. It thus seems natural here to talk of Eliot creating two works and then fusing them to create *Middlemarch*. If this way of talking is respectable, we should have no trouble accepting that Stevenson created two characters and then fused them to create a third (Brock 2010: 361 n11).

The plausibility of this response, Brock thinks, turns on how analogous fictional characters are to other artworks, and in particular to novels. All Brock (2010: 361 n11) says in response is that he has "stressed what I take to be crucial disanalogies". But nowhere, in his 2010 at least, does Brock discuss any putative (dis)analogies between fictional characters and fictions

(or indeed other artworks). What he offers are some arguments to the effect that creationism cannot be true. If successful, these arguments would have shown that there was a disanalogy between fictional characters and fictions, on the assumption that fictions are created. But as we seen these arguments fail. As a result, this fusion response to Brock's last alleged problematic case stands. Moreover, I have stressed the analogies between fictions and fictional characters in Chapter 3, and so if we think that fictions can be fused, there is no barrier to thinking fictional characters can likewise be fused.[78]

But it seems that on the fusion interpretation the creationist faces the following problem. The creationist is committed to claiming that Stevenson created one object Hyde, a second object Jekyll and a third object the fused Hyde-Jekyll. But surely, the objection goes, the fictional character Jekyll corresponding to Stevenson's use of the name 'Jekyll' at the end of the novel is identical to the fictional character corresponding with Stevenson's of that name at the beginning of the novel. Likewise for Hyde. But the two characters corresponding to the earlier uses are not identical, and so we have a contradiction.

This objection takes the following form:

(48) The later Hyde = The later Jekyll
(49) The early Hyde = The later Hyde
(50) The early Jekyll = The later Jekyll
(51) The early Hyde ≠ The early Jekyll

By the transitivity and symmetry of identity, (48)-(50) give The early Hyde = The early Jekyll but this contradicts (51).

At this point the creationist could opt for the temporary identity view of what happens when Stevenson fuses his characters. This is not the approach recommended here, however.

[78] One disanalogy between fictions and fictional characters is stressed by Friend (2007:149), namely that whereas we deny the existence of fictional characters we do not deny the existence of fictions. The explanation for this defended here is that the names of fictional characters, and the term 'fictional character', are systematically ambiguous having a non-referring use, whereas the names of fictions are not. See Chapters 5 and 6.

The correct creationist response is that although Stevenson originally had one kind of story, a story involving two characters, Jekyll and Hyde, he changed his mind about the plot of the story, and *thereby changed the story and its ontology*. As a result, the story Stevenson ends up with after fusing his two characters involves just a single character Hyde-Jekyll character *throughout*. This story, like Stevenson's actual story, appears to start off with two distinct characters, Jekyll and Hyde, but this appearance belies the fact that both Stevenson's actual story, and our hypothetical story with the fused Hyde-Jekyll, contain only a single Jekyll-Hyde character. Of course we could have a case where an author starts off with two characters and publishes a part of a story in a magazine. But after some of the initial episodes have been published, changes his mind about the plot and fuses his two characters, using a single character in the subsequent episodes. In that case, what has gone on is that the audience started reading the beginning of one story and ends up reading the end of another. From within the pretence, the early part of the second fiction is indistinguishable from the early part of the first, so it is easy in one's make believe to take oneself to be reading a single continuous story. But as we have argued fictions do not obey the identity of qualitative indiscernibles, so there is no problem with that.

We have not provided a full answer to Brock's how-question. But nevertheless we have answered his challenge to creationism about fictional characters. Brock's challenge was that however the creationist answers the how-question, this has, as a corollary, an unsatisfactory answer to the when-question. But as I have argued, whatever the precise details of the creationist process, the creationist does not face this problem, since the creationist is not committed to the claim that uses of a fictional name associated with a fictional character, do themselves create further fictional characters. Rather they are uses which correspond to modifications of a pre-existing fictional character. And so, Brock's challenge lapses.

4. Conclusion

We have here considered and diffused three types of metaphysical objection to creationism. These objections arose in the first place from a misunderstanding of what fictional characters are, and how they are created. On the metaphysics of repeatable artworks sketched in Chapter 3 and further elucidated here, we can see that there is no reason to think that fictional characters cannot be created or change their properties; that truths about them can be read off in a straightforward way from truths in fiction; or that the creationist has nothing to say about the creative process which does not lead to an inadequate ontology. So the creationist

metaphysics of the default view is left intact. It still remains, however, to defend the default view against the claim that the ambiguity of fictional names it posits is implausible, and that as a realist view, it cannot account for our irrealist intuitions. This is the task of the next two chapters.

Chapter 5: The Systematic Polysemy of Fictional Names

We argued in Chapter 3, that part of what we take to be the default view about fictional characters, is that fictional names are ambiguous. That is, within the scope of a fiction, fictional names are empty, but that (usually) outside the scope of the fiction, fictional names refer to abstract artefacts. This us allows us to agree with the irrealist that sentences such as

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective

are best construed as involving an empty name, the whole sentence being false, assuming it expresses a thought, but true within the relevant game of make-believe. This way we avoid having to claim with the crude realist, that in sentences like (1) we are talking about and misdescribing an abstract artefact.

On the other hand, sentences like

(2) Sherlock Holmes was created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

cry out for a realist treatment. Here we depart company with the irrealist and say that in such sentences 'Sherlock Holmes' refers to an abstract artefact and so this sentence is straightforwardly and literally true. In this way we do not need to say with the irrealist that we extend the pretence licensed by the Sherlock Holmes stories beyond its proper limit, encompassing what looks like thought and talk about the world.

So here we have what seems like a well-motivated ambiguity, allowing us to provide a satisfactory account of both types of sentence. If our thought and talk about fiction were limited to sentences like (1) and (2), then the realist would have an account of all fictional discourse. Unfortunately, this is not the case. As well as having sentences which seem to concern perspectives internal to the fiction, such as (1), and sentences which involved taking up a perspective external to the fiction, like (2), there are sentences which seem to mix both perspectives. In the light of this, some irrealists have argued that that realism of any form is untenable, and that, in particular, the thesis that fictional names are ambiguous faces particular difficulties. I set out these objections below, but argue that we see similar patterns

elsewhere, and so the phenomena pointed to in the case of fictional names is not problematic for the thesis that fictional names are ambiguous.

1. Mixed Perspectives

As noted, we treat (1) and (2) in very different ways. One of the ways in which we do not treat them alike is common to most realists. (1) is made within the scope of a fiction, in a game of make-believe, whereas (2) is a serious use made outside the scope of the fiction, with the purposes of describing the world. But Friend (2007) and Pelletier (2003) have argued that whilst fine for sentences such as (1) and (2), this division of perspectives is implausible. That is, it is alleged that realists of all stripes face a problem in trying to maintain what Friend (2007: 151) calls an "unsustainably sharp distinction between the internal and external perspectives".

Commenting on the realist proposal that the role of pretence be restricted to perspectives internal to the fiction, Friend (2007: 151-152 my footnotes) responds that this proposal

> does not seem consistent with critical practice, however, which typically involves a mix of perspectives. Critics are often concerned with the interpretation of fictional content ... Even when critics acknowledge the fictionality of characters, they rarely drop the pretence entirely. In his lecture on Austen, A. C. Bradley writes, 'In all her novels, though in varying degrees, Jane Austen regards the characters, good and bad alike, with ironical amusement, because they never see the situation as it really is'.[79] In the book section of the Guardian, we discover that Mr Darcy was recently voted 'the fictional character women would most like to invite to a dinner party,' which leads the critic to reflect that 'women are swooning over a fictional character who is the epitome of the dominant patriarchal male'.[80]

[79] Bradley, A. C. 'Jane Austen: A Lecture.' *Emma: A Norton Critical Anthology*. Ed. S. M. Parish. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993. 354–7. Originally published in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association* 2 (1911): 7–36.

[80] Potter, Cherry. 'Why Do We Still Fall for Mr Darcy?' *Guardian Unlimited*, September 29, 2004. <http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1315216,00.html>.

And as Pelletier has argued, the same mix of internal and external perspectives is not limited to criticism, but is also present in fiction. For example, consider the following passage from Henry Fielding's Tom Jones:

> As we have now brought Sophia into safe hands, the reader will, I apprehend, be contented to *deposit her awhile, and to look a little after other personages*, and particularly poor Jones, whom we have left long enough to do penance for his past offences. (Quoted in Pelletier 2003: 199, his italics)

Fictions then can treat fictional characters as fictional characters without 'stepping outside the pretence or breaking the rules of fiction' (Pelletier 2003: 199). That is, as Friend (2007: 152) notes, "the metafictional claim that Sophia is a fictional character (a personage) can be embedded within the pretence of the novel".

We seem then, to be able to slide between the two perspectives without any effort or recognition of the fact that we are doing so. If the present realist proposal is to be satisfactory we must have some explanation of this fact. Let us start to provide this explanation by distinguishing three grades of lexical ambiguity.

> **Mere Homophones / Homographs / Homonyms**: Some words which differ in meaning nevertheless happen to share the same pronunciation and/or spelling. For example, *to/too/two* are homophones, *desert (arid region) / desert (leave)* are homographs and *bear (animal) / bear (carry)* are homonyms, that is, both homophones and homonyms. In these cases, the different meanings are unrelated to one another and it is an accidental fact that they happen to be vocalized or written in the same way.
>
> **Polysemes:** The distinct meanings of some homonyms are, however, related and it is not at all accidental that the meanings are vocalized and written in the same way. For example, milk (verb) / (noun), wood (material) / (collection of trees) and head (part of body above the neck) / (person in charge of an organization) are all polysemes. One type of polyseme is a metonym in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.

> **Systematic Polysemy:** Some polysemes arise not through mere contiguity of their semantic values or uses, but in a systematic, transparent and wholly predictable way.

If fictional names were mere homonyms, then the mix of perspectives highlighted by Friend and Pelletier would be a problem for the realist. If a conversation started off concerning financial institutions but ended up focussing on river banks we would notice the change in subject matter. What we have in the case of fictional names, however, is an often unnoticeable switch of perspectives. So the realist must instead say that fictional names are polysemes. Moreover, since when we read a novel we automatically learn the name of the abstract artefact, there is an especially tight connection between the two uses of fictional names. As Sainsbury writes of the realist ambiguity strategy

> polysemy is a better option for the realist than [mere] ambiguity. The idea is that some doubtless implicit general principle gets us from any one of polysemously linked meanings to any other. Normally, coming to understand a new word that manifests container/contents polysemy equips one to use it in both ways. If I tell you that a jeroboam is equivalent to four normal bottles, you should be able to understand both "This jeroboam is made of glass" and "This jeroboam is ready to drink." The close relationship between the meanings of a polysemous expression explains how both (or all) of them can be acquired in a single act of learning. If the various meanings of names are polysemously related, they can be learned in a single act (Sainsbury 2009: 139).

And as Nunberg writes

> a speaker would judge that there was nothing deviant about sentences like I ate chicken last night, or John has been working for a newspaper, and it is the standard collective practice to refer to chicken meat and newspaper publishers in this way. At the same time, we feel that these uses of chicken and newspaper would be recoverable on first hearing by a speaker who knew the uses of these words to refer to birds and publications (Nunberg 1979: 145).

But here we shall argue that there is an even tighter connection between the two uses of fictional names than in these cases of polysemy. That is, we shall argue that fictional names

are systematically polysemous. To illustrate, let's consider the following puzzle from Elizabeth Anscombe

> It is impossible to be told anyone's name. For if I am told 'That man's name is "Smith"', his name is mentioned, not used, and I hear the name of his name but not his name (Anscombe 1957: 49).

As she notes, the conclusion is obviously false. The puzzle then, is to figure out what is wrong with the argument.

On first sight, one might wonder whether there is any puzzle here at all. If I ask 'who stole my tomatoes?', you may reply truthfully and informatively 'it was Smith'. I thereby come to learn who stole my tomatoes – Smith. In this case, Smith's name is used, not mentioned, and it is by using this name that I come to know something about the referent of the name, in this case Smith. And what I learn is that Smith stole my tomatoes.

Similarly, if I ask 'what is his name?' and you reply 'his name is "Smith"', I thereby come to learn what his name is. In this case, as in the case of tomato pilfery above, the name of the referent you acquire knowledge of is used, not mentioned, and it is by using this name that I come to know something about the referent of the name. And what I learn is that 'Smith' is his name. So in general it is by using the names of things that I come to learn about the things named, so when I want to learn about the name of something, whether this be a person or a linguistic item, informative statements about it will use the name of it.

All well and good, but this misses the importance of Anscombe's puzzle. This point can be brought about by noting that there is no meaningful analogue of Anscombe's argument in the material mode

> It is impossible to be told who anyone is. For if I am told 'That man is Smith', he is mentioned, not used, and I hear his name but not him.

This is for the simple reason that people are neither mentioned nor used in the pertinent sense. But in Anscombe's original argument Smith's name *is mentioned* and it is in virtue of this that I learn Smith's name. The difference between Anscombe's case and the case of

tomato pilfery, is that in the latter case I can learn that Smith stole the tomatoes but not know who Smith is, whereas in the former case, my knowledge that 'Smith' is Smith's name is, in some sense, exhaustive. That is, upon being presented either with Smith or his name, one cannot infer which object is the other. But on being presented with the name of Smith's name, we thereby come to know Smith's name. There is a systematic relation between Smith's name and the name of Smith's name that we do not find in the case of Smith and his name. As has been emphasized before (Recanati 2001) the quoted material is itself presented. That is, a token of Smith's name is produced and attention is drawn to it.

As Anscombe (1957: 52) puts it, there is a "systematic connexion between a name and its name such that a person can form the name of the name from mere acquaintance with it, and know what name the name of a name is a name of on hearing it. This contrasts with what ordinarily holds for objects and their names". As Tajtelbaum (1957: 53) notes in response to Anscombe's posing of her puzzle, we operate with a tacit convention that "a name and its name are denoted by the same word and so the name of a name "tells" us the name". That is, we use a Lagadonian language in the case of linguistic items but not in the case of non-linguistic objects.[81]

There was no winner of the prize for solving the puzzle which Anscombe set, although Tajtelbaum received an honourable mention. This is because to say what Tajtelbaum said, that we operate with a tacit convention that "a name and its name are denoted by the same word and so the name of a name "tells" us the name" (1957: 53), does not go far enough. If it were just a matter of adopting a convention, then we could just as well have settled on some other convention, just as we could have decided to drive on the right instead of the left in the UK. But we could not have settled on just any other convention; the convention that we do in fact operate with is not arbitrary. Rather, the convention has to be this way. As Cappelen and LePore (2009) note that "To understand quotation is to have an infinite capacity, a capacity to understand and generate a potential infinity of new quotations." That is, upon first

[81] A Lagadonian language is one where objects and properties can be names for themselves (Lewis 1986: 145). In Gulliver's Travels, Gulliver visits the Academy of Science at Lagado where, at the school of languages, there is a scheme for abolishing all words. The linguists conclude that "since words are only names for things, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on". The Lagadonians thought that a "great advantage, proposed by this invention, was, that it would serve as a universal language, to be understood in all civilised nations". It is the Lagadonian nature of our metalinguistic talk that allows us to learn the names of foreigners and to quote them effectively.

encountering a quotation we can perfectly well understand them and identify their referents. If we want to be able to automatically ascend to the metalinguistic level or descend from the name of a name to the name it is the name of, we must operate with convention which is transparent in the way in which our actual practice is. This transparent systematic connection explains why we slip between the two levels so effortlessly, often not noticing when an author is mentioning or using a phrase, since we can recover the name of a word from a word, or vice versa effortlessly.

It is plausible to suppose that what enables this is that we have a single mental file which tracks a word and its name and its name's name etc. We have a single mental file and a rule for ascending and descending through the metalinguistic hierarchy. This single mental file would represent a great economy but, together with our convention, allow for the infinite capacity for dealing with quotation. Moreover, it is the presence of a single file which enables us to track words and their names simultaneously, facilitating our effortless slide between use and mention, and also our use/mention confusions. We have a single file which contains information both about a word and its name, but sometimes, because this information goes hand-in-hand, we do not partition it properly. Sometimes using a word where we mean to mention it and vice versa.

This same model is, I suggest, present in the case of fictional names. Just as there a systematic, transparent link between a name and its name, and any linguistic item and the item that names it, there is a systematic, transparent link between a name used in a fiction when the author pretends to refer with that name, and the name of the fictional object she creates. Namely, they are given by the same words. And just as when we are presented with the name of a name we can infer which name it is the name of, and vice versa, we can when presented with an author's use of a name infer the name of the fictional character created by the author, and vice versa. It is this systematic and transparent link which allows us to use fictional names in two quite different ways often without noticing. Moreover, that we can slide back and forth between different ontological categories in the case of use and mention without pause, undermines the worries that were pressed by Friend and Pelletier about the way in which we can slip between perspectives internal and external to the fiction. Although in both cases we are doing very different things with our words, there is a systematic link between them which allows us to move back and forth without cost.

Similarly, it is plausible that what underlies this productivity is a single mental file which stores both information about the Holmes of the story and the abstract object Holmes created by Conan Doyle. We open a mental file when reading a fiction and we use this to track both what is happening within the story and the representation item. Indeed, we can track what is happening in the story by tracking the representational item, the artefact Sherlock Holmes. It is no wonder then that, just as in the use/mention case, we slip between and blur perspectives, allowing us to employ a word in different ways with a different extension. Once we notice the plausibility of this picture, the objection pressed by Friend and Pelletier loses much of its force. Indeed, the irrealist herself should accept that we have a single mental file in the case of fictional names, which we exploit within both an inner pretence and an outer pretence. The difference is that whereas we say we are in addition tracking an object and well as engaging in make-believe with this single file, the irrealist says there is no object to track. But as we saw in Chapter 3, this view has costs.

This picture is not undermined by the claim that sometimes the name we most often use for a fictional character is not the one the author uses when describing the events corresponding to the fictional character. For example, in *Frankenstein* the monster created by Victor Frankenstein is given no name, but is referred to with terms like 'monster' and 'wretch'. Ordinarily, we use the term 'Frankenstein's monster' or even 'Frankenstein' to refer to the corresponding fictional character. But we should note that we use this term both for the abstract artefact created by Mary Shelley, and within the scope of the fiction when engaging in games of make-believe.

Similarly, fictional characters can be picked out in more than one way. For example, it is plausible that the fictional character Odysseus is identical to the fictional character Ulysses. But there is no systematic and transparent way to get from an author's use of 'Odysseus' to 'Ulysses' as the name of the corresponding abstract object. This multiplicity of names for an abstract artefact is not naturally mirrored in the case of use and mention, since although 'Odysseus' and 'Ulysses' name the same abstract object, ''Muhammad Ali'' and ''Cassius Clay'' do not name the same name. However, we could introduce a term '^&' that names the name 'Cassius Clay' for which the same lack of transparency and systematicity arises as in the case of moving from an author's use of 'Odysseus' to the name of the abstract object 'Ulysses'. In neither case, is our knowledge of co-reference given simply by being presented with a name: we must be aware of extra facts to know that 'Odysseus' and Ulysses' are co-

referential, and that '^&' and 'Cassius Clay' are co-referential. Moreover, we do pick out names using terms other than the transparent name of a name, for we may use a description like 'my favourite name'.

The fact that fictional names are systematically polysemous explains why we can move between perspectives internal and external to a fiction. As we shall see, it also explains a feature of fictional names which has also been argued to be problematic for the claim that fictional names are ambiguous.

2. Linguistic Double Duty and Testing For Ambiguity

The realist has a natural account of sentences such as (1) and (2). In discussing the mix of perspectives highlighted above, Everett (2005: 639) notes that critics say things like

(3) The most famous of Conan Doyle's creations is the great detective Sherlock Holmes who lives in Baker Street.

which mixes perspectives internal and external to the fiction. We argued above that such a natural mixing of perspectives of is explained by the systematic polysemy of fictional names and the associated employment of a single mental file for both tracking within the fiction and without. In passing, Everett notes that realists faces the question of how to treat sentences such as (3), and in particular, whether they should say that in such sentences 'Sherlock Holmes' refers.

It is clear that the advocate of the ambiguity thesis can neither say simply that 'Sherlock Holmes' refers in (3), since on such a reading 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' is false.[82] On the other hand, we cannot simply say that 'Sherlock Holmes' does not refer, since on such a reading 'The most famous of Conan Doyle's creations is the great detective Sherlock Holmes' is false. So it seems that we must say that in (3) 'Sherlock Holmes' both plays a non-referring role and a referring role. That is, it must do linguistic double duty.

[82] Although see Chapter 6 for realist strategies which try to deal with this problem.

In his (2007), Everett considers this question in more depth, and asks what the realist is to say about

(4) Raskolnikov is just a fictional character and consequently Raskolnikov doesn't really exist.

Again, it seems as if the advocate of the ambiguity thesis must say that Raskolnikov does linguistic double duty in (4), having both a referring and non-referring role.

Everett (2007) has argued, however, that it is simply not plausible to suggest that fictional names do linguistic double duty in this way. Everett argues that when we have words doing linguistic double duty, we have cases of syllepsis. That is, where we have linguistic double duty in a sentence, the sentence produces a painful or pun-like quality. In other cases, we just cannot get the required reading at all. Everett illustrates this with the following examples:

(5) *Sometimes she took counsel and sometimes tea

(6) *The politician's ratings fell and so did the clumsy rock-climber

(7) *Watson was Holmes's sidekick and discovered DNA.

But since there is nothing painful or pun-like about sentences like (3), Everett (2007: 59) concludes that 'Holmes' must have a single semantic value in (3) and so the ambiguity posited by the realist must be rejected.

Everett is only entitled to his conclusion, however, if all cases of linguistic double duty are cases of syllepsis. If some cases of linguistic double duty are not cases of syllepsis, then it is not clear why the naturalness of (3) and (4) would be a threat to the realist's ambiguity thesis. As Everett himself admits, there may be an explanation of why (3) and (4) sound fine. Everett (2007: 59 n7) tempers his conclusion claiming that "at the very least we need an explanation of why, if [(3) and (4)] really is a case of syllepsis, it lacks the painful and punny feel of [(5)-(7)]. It is not clear, however, what form such an explanation might take." Even this more modest conclusion is, I think unwarranted. If the realist can show that not all clear cases of syllepsis are humorous, and there is no (extant) explanation for this lack of humour, then it is

not clear why the realist need provide an explanation for the lack of humour in the case of (3) and (4). So at best then Everett's observations about sentences such as (3) and (4) should be taken as posing an explanatory challenge to the realism under consideration here, rather than as refutation, but even then, it is not clear that the realist need meet the challenge, if he can show that not all cases of linguistic double duty are comical. Below I shall show that this is in fact the case. But first we should take a deeper look at linguistic tests for ambiguity, such as the one employed by Everett.

Everett's (2007) employment of (4) in his case against the ambiguity thesis of the realist is, in effect, an example of a using a conjunction reduction identity test for ambiguity. For example, the following two sentences are ambiguous

(8) They saw her duck
(9) They saw her swallow

On one reading, (8) and (9) report that some observers saw some woman's bird, whereas on the other reading (8) and (9) report that some observers saw a woman's action. In the first case 'her duck' / 'her swallow' is a noun phrase, whereas in the second case they are noun phrases followed by verbs. It is clear that these sentences have these two readings and these two readings arise from the ambiguity of 'her duck' / 'her swallow'. This clear case of ambiguity is then used to devise a test that can be used to decide upon less clear cases of ambiguity. If we conjoin (8) and (9) to give

(10) They saw her duck and they saw her swallow

we have four readings available depending on whether 'her duck' / 'her swallow' is read as a noun phrase or as a noun phrase followed by a verb. But something interesting happens when we delete the second occurrence of 'they' so that 'and' conjoins not two sentences but two subsentential components as in

(11) They saw her duck and swallow

The conjunction reduction from (10) to (11) has eliminated two of our four readings, so that we can only get a reading on which 'her duck' / 'her swallow' are both noun phrases and a

reading on which 'her duck' / 'her swallow' both contain verbs, but we cannot get a reading on which 'her duck' is a noun phrase and 'her swallow' is a verb phrase or vice versa. Such 'crossed-readings' are barred and the hypothesis is that 'her' can only play one role in (10). In (9) the polysemy of 'her duck' and 'her swallow', is exploited to allow for four readings. But once we only have one occurrence of 'her' we can only obtain two readings, and the explanation is that 'her' cannot do linguistic double duty. It must have the same semantic value in combining with 'duck' as it does when combining with 'swallow'.[83]

Returning to Everett, (4) can be seen as resulting from conjunction reduction as applied to

(12) Raskolnikov is just a fictional character. Consequently, Raskolnikov doesn't really exist.

Now our realist maintains that the two occurrences of 'Raskolnikov' in (12) have different semantic values, but by the conjunction elimination test, 'Raskolnikov' can only have one semantic value in (4) (otherwise it would sound funny), but the realist requires that 'Raskolnikov' does double duty in (4) and so the realist position is incorrect.

As Zwicky and Saddock (1975) discuss, the conjunction reduction identity test is one of the many tests that linguists use to test for ambiguity.[84] Another, similar test is the pronominalization identity test.

(13) Harry received a file from Bill and gave a file to Jane

The two occurrences of 'file' can take on different semantic values, so that (13) might mean that Bill gave Harry a nail file whilst Harry gave Jane a dossier. But this interpretation is not available in

[83] The way in which conjunction reduction is used as a test for ambiguity is as follows. The test is designed to demarcate genuine ambiguity as in 'they saw her duck', which does not rule on whether it was a bird or an action that was witnessed, from mere unspecificity as in 'my sister is tall', which does not rule on whether she is older than me or left-handed. If I reduce 'my sister is tall and my sister is smart' to 'my sister is tall and smart' we still get all four readings. That is it is left open whether she is older than me or not and whether she is left-handed or not and these can be combined in any way. But as we have seen, in genuine cases of ambiguity crossed-readings are eliminated. Therefore, according to the test, if crossed-readings are permitted we do not have a case of ambiguity.

[84] Zwicky and Saddock (1975) provide a taxonomy of such tests. Not all of the tests detailed by Zwicky and Saddock are relevant to the case at hand.

(14) Harry received a file from Bill and gave it to Jane

Here the pronoun 'it' must refer to the same type of file as the type of file received by Harry from Bill. Moreover, 'it' must refer to the same token file. It seems then that 'it' has its reference determined anaphorically according to the initially plausible Principle of Anaphoric Reference (PAR)

PAR: An anaphoric term has the same referent as its antecedent.[85]

But just as conjunction reduction identity tests pose a problem for the ambiguity thesis of the realist, so does the pronominalization identity test. According to our realist the two occurrences of Holmes in

(15) The most famous of Conan Doyle's creations is the great detective Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes lives in Baker Street.

have different semantic values. But just as (15) sounds fine, so does the pronominalized form (3)

(3) The most famous of Conan Doyle's creations is the great detective Sherlock Holmes who lives in Baker Street.

The anti-ambiguity line of thought is as follows. If our realist is to say that (3), just like (15), is true, then again he needs it to be the case that 'Holmes' and 'who' have different semantic values. But this violates the pronominalization test for ambiguity and PAR. So the realist's account of (15) and (3) cannot be correct, and so must be rejected.[86]

[85] Kent Bach (1997, 2000) assumes PAR and uses it to reject Fregean reference-shifting accounts of propositional attitudes.

[86] Another identity test for ambiguity is so-reduction. 'I called her a cab and George called her a cab' can be so-reduced to 'I called her a cab and so did George'. The first sentence has four readings depending on whether the occurrences of 'called her a cab' are interpreted to mean 'phoned for a taxi' or to mean 'said of someone that she is a cab'. The reduced form only has two readings however, the crossed readings now being unavailable. Such a test cannot be used to test for ambiguity in singular terms however. See Chapter 6 for some discussion of so-reduction.

We shall show in the next section that both tests for ambiguity implicitly appealed to by Everett fail. The realist, then, is free to permit the ambiguity of fictional names which we motivated in Chapter 3.

3. Anaphoric Connection, Ambiguity and Deferred Ostension

We noted above that if the pronominalization identity test is to be a good test for ambiguity and is to be used to undermine the realism defended here, then the following seemingly plausible principle must be true

PAR: An anaphoric term has the same referent as its antecedent.

It is PAR that prevents the realist from accounting for the truth of (3) by positing an ambiguity in the semantic values of fictional names and related referring terms. But why could the contribution that 'he' makes in (3) not be anaphorically determined in some other way? Why cannot the anaphoric reference be determined by some relation other than identity? There seems to be no in principle impossibility to this being the case, although as the pronominalization identity test shows, oftentimes this is not the case. The realist then must say that 'who' has its contribution determined anaphorically by 'Holmes', but is not co-referential with it. A solution of this type is not ad hoc, as recent work in linguistics shows the need for anaphoric dependence without co-reference.

For example, it is plausible that Quine's (1960) discussion of referentially opaque contexts shows that such a thing is possible. Consider Quine's famous pair

(16) Giorgione was so-called because of his size
(17) Barbarelli was so-called because of his size

(16) is true and (17) is false despite the fact that Giorgione was Barbarelli. A plausible explanation of this is that the contribution that 'so-called' makes to the content of (16) is anaphorically *dependent* on the occurrence of 'Giorgione' whereas the contribution it makes to (17) is anaphorically dependent on the occurrence of 'Barbarelli'. But the contribution that 'so-called' makes is not identical in the two claims, so it cannot be determined by the referent of 'Giorgione' / 'Barbarelli' as this does not differ. Rather, what happens is that in the first

case ‘so-called’ contributes ‘called ‘Giorgione’’ and in the second case ‘so-called’ contributes ‘called ‘Barbarelli’’ and it is this difference that explains the difference in the truth values of (16) and (17). So here, plausibly, we have anaphoric dependence without co-reference.

Moreover, we can find the same thing with singular terms. Consider the following groups of examples taken from Ken Safir’s book *The Syntax of Anaphora*.[87]

Original and Likeness:

(18) Marlene Dietrich admired herself but thought she ought to have been dressed differently.
(19) Fidel Castro bumped into himself (and broke his arm).
(20) At the costume ball, Marlene and Fidel kept running into themselves.
(21) Hitchcock liked himself in that movie.

The set-up is that in (18) and (19), Marlene Dietrich and Fidel Castro are in a wax museum where Marlene is admiring a statue of herself, and Fidel is damaging his own likeness. In (20), Marlene and Fidel are constantly running into people in Fidel or Marlene costumes and in (21) that Hitchcock makes a movie about himself in which he is portrayed by Orson Welles, and Hitchcock himself makes a cameo appearance as a man at a bus stop. (21) can then be read as claiming that Hitchcock is happy with how he is portrayed by Welles.

As Safir notes

> In these cases, the SELF form is not even coreferent with its antecedent extensionally, though it is clear that the reflexive allows for an interpretation where the referent of the SELF form is clearly dependent on its antecedent, such that the identity of the SELF form referent is a function of that of its antecedent (2004: 112).

And this is exactly what the realist needs to account for the truth of (3). Examples of this non-coreferential anaphoric reference multiply:

[87] See the Safir for further references.

Author and Work:

(22) Grisham will be reading himself in Swahili soon.

(23) Looking up at the scoreboard, Sosa saw himself in second place (the baseball player Sammy Sosa is looking at his home run statistics, not at himself).

Representative Vehicle:

(24) Alice rolled the dice and then moved herself three spaces.

(25) Patton positioned himself between the Germans and the sea.

And as Safir notes, this phenomena is not limited to reflexive forms as witnessed by the following:

(26) As they strolled through the wax museum, Fidel could not help thinking that he would have looked better in a uniform, and Marlene could not help thinking that she would have looked better without one.

(27) The masquerade ball was a bit disconcerting. It seemed to Marlene that everywhere she looked, either her nose was too long or her chin too weak.

(28) Hitchcock thought he looked insufficiently bald in that scene (as played by Welles).

(29) Grisham claims that he is even more suspenseful in Swahili.

(30) Alice thought she was positioned to win until the Red Queen knocked her into the bushes.

(31) Patton realized that he would be vulnerable to a flanking movement.

So we can see that the assumption about anaphoric reference, PAR, that caused the problem for the realist's account of (3) is false. Note in the above that all the examples involve representations and what is represented, and so this parallels the claim made by the realist that there is anaphoric dependence without co-reference in the case of fictional characters, a representation, and what is represented in a work of fiction.

But the phenomenon is not limited to representation cases. As Geeraerts notes of Nunberg's (1979) example

(32) The newspaper has decided to reduce its size

> the item *newspaper* refers first to the management of or the board of directors of the paper, and then to the paper as material object. The perfect grammaticality does not allow us to spot any polysemy using the pronominalization identity test (Geeraerts 1993: 296).

And as Sainsbury, himself an irrealist, concedes

> It might seem easy to refute the alleged polysemy by reflecting on anaphoric relations. In
>
> Sherlock Holmes is a detective. He was created by Conan Doyle
>
> it seems that our realist will have to say that "Sherlock Holmes" refers to nothing yet that "He" refers to an [abstract] object (to give a straightforwardly relational reading of the second sentence). If an anaphorically dependent pronoun had to agree in reference with the expression on which it depends, that would be a powerful argument. But we can see in other cases that the principle is false. For example, in
>
> He drank the whole bottle and smashed it to the floor
>
> "the bottle" has its contents reading whereas "it" has its container reading. There's been a shift in reference, despite the dependence. So we shouldn't attack realism on the grounds that its commitment to polysemy prevents it from giving an adequate account of anaphoric dependence. (2009: 139).

However, this observation does not by itself address Everett's worry about the felicity of (4). As Sainsbury (2009: 98-99) says about such cases "speakers have no conscious awareness of ambiguity, and have no problems, or sense of zeugma, confronted with ... what ought to be distinct uses of the name" and that this is a reason not to ascribe ambiguity or polysemy.[88] [89]

[88] The part cut from the quote is "anaphoric linkages across". Given what Sainsbury says on p. 139 about anaphora, I presume this is a slip.

But Sainsbury's position is an odd one. Given the similarity between pronominalization and conjunction reduction, shouldn't we expect the latter to fail, if the former does? Moreover, presumably non-coreferential anaphoric dependence is possible because the antecedent can do double duty? It is the fact that the antecedent can access both meanings that allows the pronoun to have a different reading from its antecedent.

Odd or not, we can show that, Sainsbury and Everett are wrong to use conjunction reduction against the realist thesis of ambiguity, since just as we can have anaphoric connections that do not require sameness of reference, singular terms can do double duty in just the way required by the realist.

First we should note that words can often be used to refer to things other than their customary referent. Consider the following extensions of the cases considered by Safir

(33) John thought Hitchcock looked insufficiently bald in that scene (as played by Welles).
(34) I think Grisham is even more suspenseful in Swahili.
(35) I looked up at the scoreboard and saw Sosa was in second place[90]

Here 'Hitchcock', 'Grisham and 'Sosa' are all being used to refer to things other than the men those names ordinarily designate. Here what we have are cases of metonymy, where a word which has a customary referent, is used to refer to something else. Such examples are familiar in the linguistics literature. As Nunberg (1979: 144) notes "a given term may be used to refer to any number of things, by the processes of metaphor and metonymy". Nunberg provides the following examples

(36) The window was broken. (= 'window glass')
(37) The window was boarded up. (='window opening')

[89] Sainsbury (2009: 99) offers one other criticism of positing ambiguity. He writes "one would miss out on what to me is one of the most attractive features of abstract artefact theory, its ability to explain authorial creation as literally bringing something new into existence. It's authors who do that, not critics." But this criticism is confused. That we take metafictional discourse as evidence for realism does not mean that it is critics who create fictional characters. On the present view authors create fictional characters but their uses of names within fictions do not refer to them.
[90] This example could be disputed. Perhaps it is equivalent to 'I looked up at the scoreboard and saw *that* Sosa was in second place', where the latter claim is a knowledge ascription and not simply a perceptual report. No matter, there are plenty more examples with which to make the point.

(38) The newspaper weighs five pounds. (= 'publication')
(39) The newspaper fired John. (= 'publisher')

(40) The chicken pecked the ground. (= 'bird')
(41) We ate chicken in bean sauce. (= 'meat')

(42) The chair was broken. (= 'chair token')
(43) The chair was common in nineteenth-century parlours. (= 'chair type')

By itself, such observations of metonymy do not answer Everett's challenge. But such cases allow for conjunction reductions that allow the relevant singular term to do double duty. So consider the following examples, adapted from Nunberg (1979), where an item has been deleted

(44) The chair you're sitting in was common in nineteenth century parlours.
(45) The window was broken and then boarded up.

Here we have a singular term playing two roles without any trace of painful syllepsis. In (44), 'The chair you're sitting in' must play both the token role of (42) and the type role of (43). Similarly, in (45), 'The window' must play the window glass role of (36) and the window area role of (37). Similarly, the following examples require a singular term to do linguistic double duty:

(46) The game is very difficult to learn but takes only five minutes to play
(47) France is a republic with a varied topography

Returning to quotation, a second feature of quotation emphasised by Cappelen and LePore (2009) is that quoted words can be simultaneously used and mentioned. The suggestion here is that it is because of the first property of quotation, that there is a systematic and transparent link between linguistic items and their names, that words can be both used and mentioned simultaneously. For example, in

(48) Quine said that quotation '... has a certain anomalous feature'

‘has a certain anomalous feature’ is both mentioned and used and we don’t even think about this until it is pointed out. It is used as a predicate to complete the sentence and say that Quine said that quotation has a certain anomalous feature, but it is also mentioned demonstrating the precise way in which Quine made part of his claim. The speaker of (48) not only demonstrates the way in which Quine said something, he also performs a distinct locutionary act to which the demonstrated words themselves contribute. As Recanati says, “It is in that sense that the quoted words can be said to be used simultaneously in saying something and performing a demonstration” (2001: 659). So the tight link between quotations and their referents explains not only Anscombe’s puzzle but also why we can so readily both use and mention words. The suggestion here is that we have a similar phenomenon in the case of fictional names.

So we see, contra Everett, that singular terms can do double duty without infelicities, in just the way that our realist requires.

Nunberg (1979: 148) observes “that these patterns of multiple word-use show up in what Quine has called 'deferred ostension,' as well”. For example, I can point at a copy of a newspaper and felicitously say

(49) That was bought by Hearst last week

But what I pointed at was a copy of a newspaper, whereas the referent of ‘that’ needed for the intended interpretation of (64) is the newspaper publisher. This leads Nunberg (1979: 150) to conclude that the failures of conjunction reduction and pronominalization identity tests for ambiguity “arise out of the same process that allows deferred ostension”.

Nunberg’s (1979: 149) conclusion is supported by the fact that “The parallel between polysemy and ostension holds even for those specialized uses that a word may have in certain contexts”. For example, a waiter may say to a colleague

(50) The ham sandwich is sitting at table 20.

Similarly, he could point at a ham sandwich and say

(51) He is sitting at table 20.

In fact, the phenomenon is even more widespread that Nunberg realises. Nunberg (1979: 150) notes that the failures of identity or co-reference detailed above can occur where there is genuine polysemy, but "they are blocked by real [mere] homonymy". But in certain contexts, this is not the case. As Deane (1988: 345) notes, explicit comparison also allows for coordination of homonyms in the way denied by Nunberg. For example in

(52) The bank John had trouble finding was not the one where he had cashed the cheque but the one where he had moored the boat.

I do not propose to offer an explanation of how deferred ostension is possible and how exactly it underwrites failures of conjunction reduction and pronominalization identity tests for ambiguity. But the fact that deferred ostension and the failures of conjunction reduction identity tests are so prevalent, rebuts Everett's argument that the realist's positing of an ambiguity in fictional names is implausible given the straightforward way in which we interpret (3) and (4).

But the fact that linguistic double duty is tied up with our capacity for deferred ostension, might lead one to worry about the adequacy of the proposed reply to Everett. First, it might be objected, that we cannot have deferred ostension in fictional contexts. On the one hand we cannot point to an abstract object at all and on the other hand, on the intra-fiction use, a fictional name has no referent. This worry is easily dealt with, however. All Nunberg is claiming is that the capacity for deferred ostension *underwrites* our ability for conjunction reduction and pronominalization without co-reference. Once such coordination is possible, there is nothing to prevent it from taking place in cases where there is no possibility of deferred ostension. Moreover, it is simply false to say that there cannot be deferred ostension in fictional cases. For example, I can point at an actor and say 'he is the Lothario type character in this play'. Alternatively, I can point at a concrete inscription of a fictional name and say 'she is my favourite fictional detective'. So the connection between non-coreferential coordination and deferred ostension does not undermine my defence of the ambiguity of fictional names in this way.

4. Conclusion

We have seen then, that the well-motivated picture of fictional names as polysemous is not threaten by postulating a distinction between what goes on in a pretence and what goes on without it. Moreover, by considering further cases of polysemy, we can see that the posited ambiguity is not threatened by mixed sentences as such coordination of non-coreferential terms is widespread.

In the next chapter we shall see how the ambiguity thesis allow the realist to provide a simple and natural account of negative existentials, one which is unavailable to realists who do not allow that fictional names are ambiguous.

Chapter 6: Realism about Fictional Characters and Negative Existentials

We argued in Chapter 2 that we can provide an adequate account of singular negative existentials, treating 'exists' either as a first-level predicate, or as a second-level predicate, only if we allow for the intelligibility of empty names. Furthermore, we argued that either way of cashing out the account is compatible with a non-Russellian and a broadly Russellian account of names.

As we saw, the basics of the account is that an existential claim of the form 'a exists' is false when 'a' is empty, and correspondingly its negation, 'a does not exist' is true. This is, unsurprisingly, how to account for the truth of singular negative existentials.

As I argued in Chapter 3, we ought to be realists about fictional characters, and as such can truly say

(1) Sherlock Holmes exists.

Now as noted in Chapter 3, it is not part of our practice to deny the existence of fictions, unless we are in the grip of some revisionary philosophical theory (Friend 2007: 149). Moreover, we noted that our ordinary practices seem to commit us to the existence of fictions. If I see you reading a copy of Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* and I say 'that is a great book', I am not talking about the particular copy of the novel that you hold, but rather the novel of which you have a copy. And for my statement to be true, given The Existence Principle, 'that' must be referring to a fiction.

There is, however, a problem for realists about fictional characters, which does not arise for realists about fictions. Although, we do not ordinarily deny the existence of fictions themselves, it is part of our ordinary practice to deny the existence of fictional characters (Friend 2007:149).[91] This observation is the starting point for an argument against realism about fictional characters generally, and so against the kind of realism endorsed here. Let us call this the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters.

[91] Although, realists will note that it is also part of our practice to affirm their existence: there are some fictional characters who were created only recently. An advantage of the realism propounded here is that it can adequately account both for our affirmations and denials of the existence of fictional characters unlike irrealism and other versions of realism.

In §1 I outline and defend a response to the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters as formulated above which is compatible with realism about fictional characters which exploits the polysemy of fictional names that I defended in Chapter 5. In §2, I'll then consider a different form of the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters and show how the realist can also meet this. The realist who accepts the polysemy of fictional names, therefore, can account for our irrealist intuitions concerning fiction. In §3 I then consider how realists who do not accept the polysemy of fictional names have attempted to meet the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters, arguing that these alternative realist accounts of fictional singular negative existentials fail. This shows that if one wants to admit that there are fictional characters, then one must be a realist who thinks fictional names are polysemous in the way that I have argued they are (Chapters 3 and 5), rather than a realist who thinks that fictional names (almost always) refer to fictional objects.

1. Polysemy and Singular Negative Existentials

The challenge for the realist about fictional characters is that it is part of our ordinary practice to deny the existence of fictional characters. One form of this challenge comes from apparent true fictional singular negative existentials. That is, although the realist is committed to the truth of (1), our ordinary practice commits us to the truth of

(2) Sherlock Holmes does not exist

What is more, it seems true in exactly the same way that 'Vulcan does not exist' is true. So it seems that the realism I espoused in Chapter 3 is in tension with the account of singular negative existentials I provided in Chapter 2. More generally, if fictional characters do exist, how can realists account for the truth of fictional singular negative existentials?

The obvious response for the realist about fictional characters to the challenge from fictional singular negative existentials is to say that on the true reading of (2) 'Sherlock Holmes' does not refer to a fictional character, but is empty. This allows us to maintain a uniform account of singular negative existentials, and one which respects the intuition that nonexistence goes hand-in-hand with reference failure.

Such a realist response posits an ambiguity in fictional names. But as we have seen already, such an ambiguity is independently plausible, for it allows us to respect the dual-perspectives we can have on a fiction, and allows us to capture our realist intuitions about fictional characters. We shall now show that it also allows us to capture our irrealist intuitions about fictional characters as manifested in our commitment to (2).

The approach recommended here is that the account of singular negative existentials argued for in Chapter 2 applies as equally to fictional negative existentials such as (2). That is, working within a background negative free logic, regardless of whether we adopt a broadly Russellian approach to names or not, the truth of (2) is to be explained by the fact that 'Sherlock Holmes exists' is a simple sentence with an empty name, and as such is false. Its negation, represented by (2), is therefore true. The truth conditions of (2) are then provided by (3) or (4) depending on one's general approach to names:

(3) ~[λx. x exists <Sherlock Holmes>]

(4) ~Really[λx. x exists <Sherlock Holmes>].

Alternatively, if we are to treat exists as a second-level predicate, still working within a background negative free logic, the truth conditions of (2) are given by (5) or (6)

(5) ~[λF. ∃x Fx <=Sherlock Holmes>]

(6) ~Really[λF. ∃x Fx <=Sherlock Holmes>].

These truth conditions are compatible with the realism about fictional characters advocated in Chapter 3, since, on this account fictional names are polysemous, having one reading on which they are empty, allowing us to account for the truth of (2) in the most straightforward way, and another on which they refer to fictional characters, allowing us to account for the truth of (1) in the most straightforward way. When we wish to describe our realism and affirm (1), then we are using the name 'Sherlock Holmes' to refer to the fictional character created by Conan Doyle. On the other hand when we utter true singular negative existentials, such as (2), we are using the name 'Sherlock Holmes' as Conan Doyle does when he is pretending to refer in the course of writing the Holmes stories.

We should head off one possible misunderstanding, before we consider some objections to this account of fictional singular negative existentials. If (2) is uttered from within the relevant pretence, as part of the make-believe licensed by Conan Doyle's writing, then it is false. A similar way to make the same point is that

(7) According to the Sherlock Holmes stories, Sherlock Holmes does not exist

is false. On the other hand, if (2) is uttered from outside of the pretence, it is also false, *if all such uses of fictional names refer to fictional characters*. That is, if fictional names are only empty when they occur within the scope of a fiction or fictions, then there is no way for the realist to account for the truth of fictional singular negative existentials such as (2). Therefore, the realist must reject this crude dichotomy.

When we utter a true fictional singular negative existential what we are doing is employing a fictional name as used within the fiction, from a perspective without the fiction. We are using a fictional name as a fictional name and then, as Wiggins puts it (1995) making a comment on the fiction by using the fiction within a reality-invoking mode. That uses of empty fictional names are not confined to uses within the various pretences, can be seen by the fact that someone may think a story is a work of biography, using the name as the author used it, but mistakenly thinking that this name can be uses to make true simple claims about the world. In the same way, someone who uses 'Sherlock Holmes' when it is empty, cannot truly utter (1), but because of this, he can truly utter (2). This then is our realist account of the truth conditions of fictional singular negative existentials.

Anthony Everett (2007) raises three objections to the account above. First, as we have seen (Chapter 5), Everett rejects our polysemous approach to fictional names because of the presence of mixed sentences, where fictional names must play a dual linguistic role. But as I argued there, such linguistic double duty is common and unproblematic. So the fact that there can be mixed sentences containing fictional negative existential claims such as

(8) Raskolnikov is just a fictional character and consequently doesn't really exist

where the fictional name has to do double duty – both having a non-empty role to make the first half of the sentence true, and an empty role to make the singular negative existential true

– is no objection to the polysemy-based realist approach to fictional negative existentials given here. Similarly, given that we can have anaphoric dependencies without co-reference, the felicity of sentences such as

(9) Raskolnikov is just a fictional character and consequently he doesn't really exist,

where 'Raskolnikov' has to refer, but 'he' needs to empty, poses no threat to our treatment of fictional negative existentials.

Second, Everett claims that to postulate an asymmetry between how fictional names work in negative existentials and how fictional names work in the sentences which motivate realism, is an unmotivated ad hoc manoeuvre. Now if the ambiguity proposed above were posited merely in response to the problem of negative existentials, *perhaps* Everett's claim would have some force, although that is far from clear. Leaving Meinongianism to one side, any theorist who wishes to say that there are true fictional negative existentials must allow that fictional names in such sentences are empty, or otherwise provide some deviant semantic analysis. On the other hand, as Everett notes, there are sentences which seem especially well-suited to a realist treatment. Such sentences appear "to involve explicit reference to or quantification over fictional characters" (Everett 2007: 57), for example

(10) Raskolnikov is a fictional character
(11) The character of Raskolnikov was created by Dostoyevsky
(12) Raskolnikov is a more realistic character than Alyosha
(13) There are fictional characters which could never have been depicted prior to the creation of Raskolnikov

Given these two facts then, it seems the kind of ambiguity endorsed here *is* well-motivated. But in any case, the ambiguity of fictional names is motivated independently of questions of existence. As noted in Chapter 3, our thought and talk about fiction is distinguished by the fact that we can take perspectives internal and external to the fiction. When authors write fiction it is not very plausible that they are writing about abstract objects as a matter of course. Rather they are pretending[92] that there are certain people who do the things described

[92] I'm using pretence here as a placeholder for whichever attitude it is that authors have when writing fiction.

in the work of fiction. As such they are using names that have no referents. Similarly, when we engage with fiction and have emotional responses to fiction, it is more plausible to suppose that we are pretending that there are people who have undergone the experiences described in the work of fiction, rather than pretending of some abstract object that it has properties only people can possess. This is what the irrealist about fiction gets right.

On the other hand, as seen above, the best account of fictional practice and our metafictional discourse that motivates realism seems best captured by positing fictional characters. So the ambiguity in fictional names posited here reflects the duality of our thought and talk about fiction. So, contra Everett, positing ambiguity here is not an ad hoc manoeuvre, but is motivated by the facts to which Everett draws our attention. It is only a polysemous account that can capture both what the irrealist and the crude realist get right about fiction, and so it would appear to be the best account of fictional names. Of course, if this polysemy were otherwise objectionable, this would give us a reason to reconsider it. But as argued in Chapter 5, this polysemous account is not objectionable in the way that Everett thinks it is.

Everett's final charge against positing an ambiguity in fictional names starts from the observation that the referents of nonfictional names do not vary depending on whether they occur in negative existential sentences or other contexts. So, for example, the names in (14) and (16) both refer to Saul Kripke, whereas the name in (15) and (17) fails to refer.

(14) Kripke doesn't exist
(15) Vulcan does not exist
(16) Kripke is a philosopher
(17) Vulcan is a planet

So why is it that in fictional negative existentials, such as (2), the name does not refer to the same thing that it does in sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes was created by Arthur Conan Doyle'?

But it is a contention of the realism advocated here that fictional discourse is special, in so far as it exhibits the duality of perspectives noted above. As noted above, it is not that fictional names fail to refer in negative existential statements but refer everywhere else. Now, as our discussion of Wiggins in Chapter 2 showed, for Russellians at least, we do exploit a kind of

fiction, failed presupposition, in making sense of failed reference once we know we have a case of failed reference, even in the case of 'Vulcan'. So in that sense we have a duality of perspectives even in the case of failed scientific posits. But all we have here is what Walton (1990: Chapter 11) calls betrayals and disavowals of fiction. There are no positive claims using 'Vulcan', however, that require us to posit an abstract object to which 'Vulcan' refers in such claims, or so I will argue in a sequel to this thesis. Moreover, theorizing does not require that we create a fictional entity, in the way that good fiction requires the creation of fictional characters.

In any case, as already argued in Chapters 3 and 5 it is simply not true that nonfictional singular terms are unambiguous in way that Everett suggests. As a result we can find pairs of sentences with non-fictional singular terms that exhibit variation in reference, just as we do in fictional discourse. For example,

(18) Grisham is a popular author
(19) Grisham reads much better in Swahili

In (18), 'Grisham' refers to the US author John Grisham, whereas in (19) it does not. And as we argued in Chapter 5, even the singular term 'I', which has a special connection to the author of an utterance, can have variation in reference similar to that of proper names. So it is simply not true that "the current suggestion involves postulating an unattractive and otherwise unmotivated asymmetry between the behaviour of fictional and nonfictional names in negative existential contexts." (Everett 2007: 59).

2. 'Fictional Characters', Quantification, and Polysemy

The above formulation of the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters to realism was formulated using fictional names. The realism espoused here could respond to this challenge given its commitment to the polysemy of fictional *names*. Employing this polysemy allowed us to retain our realism and uphold true singular existential claims, such as (1), whilst accounting for our apparent denial of realism encoded in claims such as (2).

But the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters need not be formulated in terms of fictional names. Because of this the response above which relied on the polysemy of

fictional names does not offer a general realist response to the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters. Nevertheless, I think the realist can avail herself of a similar strategy, albeit one that does not rest directly on the polysemy of fictional names.

Stuart Brock (2011) considers the following version of the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters which he attributes to Yagisawa[93]

(20) According to common sense, fictional characters do not exist.
(21) Realism entails that fictional characters do exist.
Therefore,
(22) Realism is in conflict with common sense.

As Brock notes this argument shows that realists "cannot satisfactorily account for some claims commonly made "about" creatures of fiction" (Brock 2010: 345). In order to refute realism about fictional characters, this argument would need to be supplemented with some claim to the effect that any theory that conflicts with common sense is to be rejected. Of course, any such premise is going to be too strong. A more plausible attack on realism would note that (22) is a cost of any realist position, and so, ceteris paribus, realism is to be rejected. But, as Brock, himself an irrealist, notes, irrealists also have difficulty with claims about fiction. Brock thinks that for all this argument shows, realists can "claim that while their theory does not provide a uniform treatment of all claims about fictional characters, it is still the best theory on balance" (2010: 345).

Ordinarily, one might be wary of replying in the way Brock suggests, since it seems that, realism still fails to account for some of the data, and so, ultimately, it ought to be rejected. But if realism and irrealism together exhaust logical space, then one of them must be correct, and so the realist could reply along the lines Brock suggests: it may be that we have to give up on something that we find intuitive. But that we should give up on the claim that fictional characters do not exist is a very large cost for realism. I shall argue, however, that the realist can endorse the claim that fictional characters do not exist, and so this version of the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters lapses.

[93] Brock (2011: 343) formulates the argument as a challenge to creationism rather than realism per se, but nothing in the argument turns on distinctively creationist claims. Although Yagisawa (2001) does press the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters, he makes no explicit appeals to common sense as the Brock version in the text does.

Now what realism entails is that there are fictional characters (Chapter 3). So if this argument is to be valid, (20) must be taken as making a universal claim, along the lines of the claims that Yagisawa explicitly appeals to: 'all fictional individuals are nonexistent' and 'no fictional individual exists' (Yagisawa 2011: 170). But it is not entirely clear that the irrealist is entitled to make such universal claims. If Napoleon is a fictional character in virtue of the fact that Tolstoy writes about him in War and Peace and Napoleon exists, then it seems that some fictional characters do exist. Of course, this relies on the assumption that 'Napoleon' as used by Tolstoy refers to the concrete individual who was emperor of France (See Friend (2000) for a defence of this claim). We can avoid this issue in one of two ways: we could reformulate the argument with 'merely fictional' in place of 'fictional', where this is understood not to apply to Napoleon, or else by making the irrealist premise an existential claim and the realist commitment a universal claim, along the lines of the following

(23) According to common sense, merely fictional characters do not exist
(24) Realism entails that merely fictional characters exist

(25) According to common sense, some fictional characters do not exist
(26) Realism entails that all fictional characters exist

But let us leave the precise nature of formulating the challenge to one side, as the nature of the challenge seems clear enough: we seem to deny the existence of fictional characters, but realism is committed to their existence.

We should note that the irrealist faces a similar challenge, the challenge from the existence of fictional characters:

(27) According to common sense, there are fictional characters, for example, Sherlock Holmes

(28) Irrealism entails that there are no fictional characters; that fictional characters do not exist.

Therefore,

(29) Irrealism is in conflict with common sense.

The irrealist could respond by claiming that there is an equivocation: the quantifier phrases in (27) and (28) are not duals, and so there is no inconsistency between (27) and (28). There are two ways of cashing this out.

First, the irrealist could claim that although the quantifiers in (27) and (28) are of the same type, the quantifier in (28) is a restricted version of the quantifier in (27). It is hard to see how this strategy can help the irrealist, however. If the quantifiers are construed objectually, then the irrealist is committed to there being some fictional characters. As we have rejected Meinongianism, this means that the irrealist is committed to the claim that some fictional characters exist, and this is the defining claim of realism about fictional characters. Even the realist can admit that if we restrict our objectual quantifiers to, say, concrete objects, then our quantifiers do not range over fictional characters. If, on the other hand, the quantifiers are treated non-objectually, as substitutional quantifiers or as means for generalizing into syntactic position, then given that Sherlock Holmes is one of the fictional characters that irrealists deny the existence of, this response does not help since we can generalize from

(30) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character

to

(31) There are fictional characters

and it is (31) that irrealism denies.

The second irrealist response to the challenge from the existence of fictional characters claims that the argument employs two different types of quantifier. This irrealist maintains that the quantifier in (27) is not 'existentially-loaded', perhaps being a substitutional quantifier, whereas the quantifier in (28) is a standard non-Meinongian objectual quantifier. The tension is resolved since the truth of (27) requires only the truth of (30), which according to the irrealist does not require a referent of 'Sherlock Holmes'. On the other hand, all that (28) denies is that there are any such objects as Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson etc.

But note that the realist can also avail himself of these strategies. First, the realist can apply the quantifier variance strategy by claiming that the implicit quantifier in (20) or the explicit quantifier in (25) are restricted versions of the quantifiers in (21) and (24). But this strategy is of no help when faced with the reformulated argument in terms of (25) and (26), since even if the quantifier in (25) ranges over a subset of the domain of the quantifier in (26), there is still a clash. But note that given our rejection of Meinongianism, the quantifier in (25) cannot be read objectually. So this brings us on to the second strategy.

The realist could say that the quantifier denying the existence of fictional characters is not to be read objectually, but rather, say, substitutionally. Since the realist agrees that there are many true fictional singular negative existentials, indeed all those involving the names of merely fictional characters, this underwrites the truth of (20), (23) and (25) when read substitutionally

Both the realist and the irrealist then need to say that sometimes natural language quantification is non-objectual. The realist must say this in order to capture the truth of '(some) fictional characters do not exist', whereas the irrealist needs it in order to capture the falsity of 'there are fictional characters'.

We should note, however, that the challenge to irrealism from the existence of fictional characters cannot plausibly be explicitly formulated in terms of 'exist', but rather has to be formulated in terms of 'there are', whereas the challenge to realism from the nonexistence of fictional characters can be formulated either in terms of 'exists' or in terms of 'there are'. Of course, given our non-Meinongian treatment of objectual quantifiers, 'there are fictional characters' is equivalent to 'fictional characters exist'. Nevertheless, the challenge to irrealism cannot be formulated explicitly in terms of 'exists'. We might think, then, that this constitutes evidence that the quantifier in 'there are fictional characters' is non-objectual, whereas the quantifier in '(some) fictional characters exist' is the objectual one. If so, this would mean that whilst the realist still faces the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters, the irrealist does not, after all, face a challenge from the existence of fictional characters

I do not think, however, that this is the case. We have already argued that there are good reasons for believing in the existence of fictional characters, and these reasons have not been addressed here. Moreover the realist can admit, as we have shown above, the intuition that fictional characters do not exist. In our ordinary discourse, we are strongly inclined to affirm fictional singular negative existentials whilst rejecting fictional singular existentials. It is only once we consider fictional characters as theorists, and perhaps as authors plotting our fictional works, that we recognize that we are committed to their existence. Similarly, the irrealist intuition carries across to general existential statements. We are strongly inclined to say that fictional characters do not exist, generalizing from the true fictional singular negative existentials. But once as theorists we recognize the reasons for positing fictional characters, we are happy to say that fictional characters do exist.

In any case, the irrealist about fictional characters will have to recognize the non-objectual nature of some generalizations from singular negative existentials. As Wiggins points out

> it is perfectly possible to say, without contradicting oneself, that there are all sorts of things that don't exist – dragons, Vulcan (the putative planet postulated by Leverrier), Scylla, Charybdis, for instance (Wiggins 1995: 96)

And given that 'there are things which do not exist' is contradictory if we interpret the quantifier objectually, the irrealist is committed to some natural language quantified claims being interpreted non-objectually.

Wiggins suggests that what is happening here is that 'thing' makes it possible for us to quantify over first-level concepts so that we can say that they are not instantiated. Now the realist about fictional characters cannot use Wiggins' explanation to account for the felicity of 'fictional characters do not exist', since he maintains that the relevant first-level concept is instantiated. But similarly, the irrealist about fictional characters cannot appeal to Wiggins' account for 'there are fictional characters' since for them the relevant first-level concept is not instantiated. But however we account for this non-objectual quantification, the realist

about fictional characters can maintain that statements like 'no fictional character exists' and 'fictional characters do not exist' are simply more of the same.[94]

Before examining the adequacy of other realist treatments of fictional singular negative existentials, let us examine the quantificational analogue of Everett's problem of mixed sentences for the claim that fictional names are polysemous. Consider the following quantified sentence

(32) Some fictional characters exist, whereas others do not

which is the conjunction-reduced form of (33).

(33) Some fictional characters exist, whereas some fictional characters do not (exist)

(33) itself is licensed by sentences such as

(34) Prince Andrei is a fictional character who does not exist
(35) Napoleon is a fictional character who exists

Now if the first half of (33) is to be interpreted as objectual quantification, then, given that the latter half of (33) is not to be interpreted as objectual quantification, then the quantified noun phrase 'some fictional characters' in (32) must be doing linguistic double duty. It must have a role as an objectual quantifier and play a role as a non-objectual quantifier.

The realist could respond by saying that the quantifier is univocally a non-objectual quantifier, which is generalizing into the name position of (34) and (35). But it is not clear that he need do so. As we saw in Chapter 5 the conjunction reduction test for ambiguity fails, and names can do linguistic double duty, although we did not see this in the case of (other) quantified noun phrases. So it is possible, for all that we have said, that quantified noun phrases cannot do linguistic double duty., and so the suggested realist treatment of (32) is implausible. But we can see that the phenomena highlighted by Nunberg (1979) extends to quantified noun phrases. For example, from

[94] See Wiggins (1995: §24) for another suggestion on how to make sense of these sentences.

(36) Snap is a game that takes only five minutes and go is game with simple rules

we appear to be able to generalize to

(37) Some games take only five minutes and others have simple rules

And all of the following seem fine

(38) Most / Some / All of the orphanage's windows were smashed and then boarded up
(39) Most / Some / All games which last only five minutes, are very hard to learn
(40) Most / Some / All republics have varied landscapes

But in these examples the quantified noun phrases must be doing linguistic double duty, if interpreted objectually, since, for example, in order for (39) to be true 'Most of the orphanage's windows' has to have one reading where 'window glass' is relevant and another where 'window opening' is. This does not establish, however, that the determiner is doing double linguistic duty here as the present realist response requires, but only that the common noun is, but such data is indicative of the wide variety of systematic polysemy in natural language. It would be no surprise then, if determiners too could be used to do linguistic double duty. But as we have said, the realist need not commit to this.

3. Other Realist Approaches to Singular Negative Existentials

So we have seen that the realist about fictional characters who maintains that there is a use of fictional names on which they are empty can account for the truth of fictional singular negative existentials. Thereby, they can account for the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters in either its singular or general forms. But what of realists who do not endorse the polysemy of fictional names? Can they account for the truth or at least the felicity of fictional singular negative existentials?

Yagisawa notes that the realist may try to account for fictional singular negative existentials by employing some paraphrase strategy. As Yagisawa conceives of this strategy, the realist concedes that fictional singular negative existentials are false, but maintains, nevertheless,

that there is some truth conveyed by our utterances of them. Yagisawa puts the point as follows: "when we say that Mrs. Gamp does not exist, what we say is not true but what we *mean* to say is true" (2001: 169). There is, however, another way of conceiving of this strategy. Instead of conceding the falsity of fictional singular negative existentials, the realist may be seen as offering a somewhat surprising account of the truth conditions of fictional singular negative existentials.

Before examining particular realist accounts, we should note that either realist approach is problematic. First, if the realist concedes that singular negative existentials are false then he has already given up a lot, for it seems that it is the *truth* of fictional singular negative existentials that we wish to hold onto. This is why such statements have proven so problematic for Russellians. Unlike other felicitous sentences which we want, after consideration, to regard as having the opposite truth value to the one they prima facie possess, there is no independent systematic explanation as to why the relevant singular negative existentials are, despite appearances, false. For example, we have seen already that 'Vulcan is a planet' is better than 'Vulcan is a detective', but given The Existence Principle, it *cannot* be true. Its felicity is to be explained not by its truth, but by Le Verrier's theorising. Similarly, 'you may have salad or soup entails you may have salad and you may have soup' seems initially true, but such an entailment cannot be upheld given certain other commitments concerning the logic of permission and obligation (see McNamara (2010: §4.3) for a brief introduction to the issues). As a result we *need* a pragmatic explanation of the appeal of such 'free choice permission'. But in the case of fictional singular negative existentials, we have no *need* to appeal to a pragmatic explanation of what appears to be true. Realism per se does not, as we have seen, rob fictional singular negative existentials of their truth. And as we have seen our judgments that such statements are true are robust, unlike in the case of Vulcan or free choice permission, where once we are asked to reconsider the sentences, we are happy to concede that such sentences are not true.

So we should take it as a constraint on theorising about fictional singular negative existentials that we preserve *the truth* of such claims. Thus the realist would do better to offer his paraphrases as analyses of existential claims, in the weak sense of providing their truth conditions. But such an approach also suffers from a strategic problem. In other cases where we offer non-obvious logical forms we are *driven* to do so in order to capture the correct truth conditions or logical relations. For example Davidson (1967) posited a quantified and

conjunctive logical form for action sentences such as 'Lorena cut John Wayne in the bedroom with a knife' so as to account for the obvious truth that this entails 'Lorena cut John Wayne in the bedroom'. Similarly, unless we want to be committed to there being an object which is the average mother, we had better not treat 'the average mother has 2.4 children' along the lines of 'the current President of the USA is a democrat' (cf. Melia 1995). But such pressures are not present in the case of fictional singular negative existentials modulo our discussion of Meinongianism and subject-predicate form in Chapter 2. As we have seen, both the irrealist and the realist who accepts the polysemy of fictional names can provide acceptable and unsurprising truth conditions of fictional singular negative existentials that match the surface form of fictional singular negative existentials (as far as is possible). Moreover, the realist about fictional characters who is an irrealist about other putative nonexistents, will be happy to accept such treatments of singular negative existentials in non-fictional cases, so wherein the difference? As stressed the differential treatment is not licensed by realism per se. In any case, leaving these strategic difficulties for realism to one side, we shall see that the realist does not get the specifics of their paraphrase treatments of fictional singular negative existentials correct, whether construed as providing the truth conditions of fictional singular negative existentials or not (I shall not distinguish between these two options below).

If the paraphrase strategy were the only one available to the realist who denies that fictional names are polysemous, this would mean that the only acceptable realist treatment of such statements on offer, is the one endorsed here. But there is another option available to this realist, which invokes a different kind of ambiguity or context-sensitivity to the one appealed to in Chapter 5. However, as we shall see in §3.4, this realist account of fictional negative existentials also fails.

Yagisawa (2001: 169) suggests that there are two standard realist paraphrase responses to the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters

> According to the first reply, what we mean to say is that there is no such woman (or human) as Mrs. Gamp. According to the second reply, what we mean to say is that nothing has all the properties ascribed to Mrs. Gamp in the story (Yagisawa 2001: 169).

Let us call these types of realist response the sortal account and the descriptive account respectively. Yagisawa rejects both realist strategies

> The first [sortal] reply has counterexamples: e.g., 'Boojams do not exist'. When we deny the existence of boojams on the grounds that they are fictional, we need not be able to give a sortal or other kind term to fill the gap in 'There are no such ( ) as boojams,' except for such an empty kind term as 'thing' or 'entities'. Since creationists maintain that boojams exist . . . it is false to say that there are no such things, or entities, as boojams[95]. . . . Does the second [descriptivist] reply fare any better? ... But that what we mean to say when we say 'Mrs. Gamp does not exist' in our attempt to contrast Mrs. Gamp with you and me is not false if some actual person about whom Dickens was not writing happens to have all the properties ascribed to Mrs. Gamp in the story. So the second reply does not fare any better. (Yagisawa 2001: 169–70).

Brock (2010: 345) thinks that Yagisawa's objection, if successful, would show only that realists "cannot satisfactorily account for some claims commonly made "about" creatures of fiction". But, as Brock says, and as noted in Chapter 4, irrealists also have difficulty with claims about fiction, for example, 'Mrs. Gamp has been discussed by many Dickens scholars'. Brock thinks that for all Yagisawa has said, realists can "claim that while their theory does not provide a uniform treatment of all claims about fictional characters, it is still the best theory on balance" (Brock 2010: 345).

We should be wary of replying in the way Brock suggests, since it seems that, if Yagisawa is correct, realism still fails to account for some data, and so, ultimately, it ought to be rejected. But if realism and irrealism together exhaust logical space, then one of them must be correct, and so it seems that the realist could reply along the lines Brock suggests: regardless of whether realism or irrealism is true, we have to give up on something that we find intuitive. But this is, in the relevant sense, a false dilemma. We have argued that the realist who endorses the polysemy of fictional names can account for fictional singular negative existentials in a straightforward way. Moreover, such a realist can help himself to Walton's

[95] Yagisawa (2001: 170) also objects that the sortal account cannot account for general negative existentials. But as argued above, if the realist can account for singular negative existentials it is plausible to say that the case of general negative existentials represent no further problem.

make-believe account of truths within a fiction, and also account for the truths that irrealists have difficulty with, in the most obvious way. The realism endorsed here, then, can provide an account of a range of truths about fiction in an obvious way. In any case, as was stressed above, that the realist should give up on accounting for fictional singular negative existential truths is a very large cost indeed.[96]

The question for the realist who rejects polysemy is whether Yagisawa's objections to the sortal and descriptivist accounts of negative existentials are decisive, and whether these are the only options available to the realist? I shall argue in §3.1 and §3.2 that Yagisawa is correct that both sortal and descriptivist accounts of fictional singular negative existentials fail. In §3.3 we shall consider and reject a metalinguistic paraphrase strategy not considered by Yagisawa, before turning to a non-paraphrase strategy in §3.4, which we shall also show is not successful. We then conclude on this basis that the realist about fictional characters can only account for fictional singular negative existentials by appealing to the independently motivated polysemy of fictional names advocated here.

3.1 Sortal Accounts

A popular realist strategy for handling fictional singular negative existentials starts from the observation that when we say things like

(2) Sherlock Holmes does not exist

what we typically intend to convey is, as noted by Yagisawa, that Sherlock Holmes is not a (real) person.[97] And the realist is certainly correct that this is at least part of what we want to get across when we utter (2). Further, it is agreed by all that Sherlock Holmes is a not real

[96] Brock (2010: 346) also claims that although realists cannot take negative existentials at face value, neither can irrealists. Claims like 'Mrs. Gamp does not exist' appear to deny that some individual has the property of existing. But, having ruled out Meinongianism, this route is not open to the irrealist, since everything whatsoever exists. But as discussed already (Chapter 2) we do not usually distinguish, because we usually do not have to distinguish, between negation as a predicate modifier and negation as a sentential operator. Once we do so distinguish, it is not clear that singular negative existentials do appear to predicate a property of an object. In any case, the account of singular negative existentials given in Chapter 2 and above, which is open to both irrealists and realists who accept that fictional names are polysemous is the least revisionary account of singular negative existentials that we can have, and so in this regard are superior to the realist accounts we are considering here.

[97] See Thomasson (1998: 112-3) Braun (2005), Salmon (1998), and van Inwagen (1977 n.11, 2000: 246–47, and 2003: 146–47).

person. So in the case of Holmes, at least, the realist proposal is extensionally correct. Yagisawa, however, argues that the account does not generalize.

Yagisawa's rejection of the sortal account fails in its present form since it relies on the claim that realists accept that there are such things as boojams. But this is not a plausible commitment of realism, notwithstanding the fact that some would accept this. Sherlock Holmes is said to be a man and a detective, whereas he is, in fact neither. So the realist commitment to the existence of Sherlock Holmes does not falsify the negative existential claims that there are no men and that there are no detectives. Similarly, a commitment to fictional characters does not involve a commitment to detectives or boojams.

Nevertheless, we can see the shape that a counterexample to a sortal account of fictional singular negative existentials must take. But in order to assess whether the sortal account holds in full generality we need a precise statement of what the account is, rather than analyzing fictional singular negative existentials in a piecemeal manner. An initially promising generalization of this idea, proposed on the realist's behalf by Everett (2007: 65) is

> Sortal 1: An utterance of ''a does not exist'' can be used to convey the claim that a is not a real S, where (i) S is a conversationally salient substance sortal and (ii) a is fictionally characterized as being an S in a conversationally salient fiction.

We need to characterize the sortal account in terms of *substance* sortals rather than just sortals, otherwise it fails to capture the intuitive claim with which we started. When we utter (2), we do not mean simply to deny that Sherlock Holmes is a real detective. Moreover, if this were the account, it would obviously be false, since fictions can mischaracterize extra-fictional objects. For example, a novel could say of Barack Obama that he is a fireman, but this would mean that 'Barack Obama does not exist' is true, when in fact it is false.

Everett thinks that Sortal 1 is not adequate as it cannot deal with general negative existentials such as

(41) Fictional objects do not exist.[98]

Everett (2007: 68) thinks the most natural way of applying Sortal 1 to (41) is as follows:

(42) Fictional objects are fictionally characterized as being S's but are not real S's.

But since there is no one S, such that all fictional characters are characterized as S's, this proposal fails. So it seems clear that we must give the sortal wider scope along the lines of

(43) Every fictional object is such that there is some substance sortal S such that the fictional object is fictionally characterized as being an S but is not really a S.

Everett (2007: 69) rejects this because whereas (41) makes a generic claim, (43) makes a universal claim. Given that generics are not very well understood and their semantics is a matter of controversy, it may seem harsh to criticize the realist (or Everett on behalf of the realist) for not being able to come up with an adequate analysis of (41) given our current state of understanding. In any case, it seems that the following realist paraphrase deals with the issue Everett is worried about:

(44) For every fictional object, there is some substance sortal S, such that the fictional object is fictionally characterized as being an S. Fictional objects, however, do not really fall under the S they are characterized as.

But for (44) to be an adequate paraphrase of (41), and for Sortal 1 to be an adequate treatment of fictional singular negative existentials generally, it must be that for every intuitively true fictional singular negative existential, 'a does not exist', there is some substance sortal such that a is characterized as being an S, but is in fact not really an S. Everett doubts whether this is the case:

> Suppose I wrote a story about Yugo in such a way that it is clear that Yugo is a fictional character but the reader is unable to determine whether Yugo is likely to be animal, vegetable, or mineral. Despite the fact that I do not

[98] The sentence that Everett in fact uses is 'Fictional characters, though often discussed by literary critics, do not exist' but it is not clear that the realist should accept that this is true, hence the amended version in the text.

> fictionally characterize Yugo as belonging to any obvious kind, I think it is clear that ['Yugo does not exist' is true] (Everett 2007: 68).

Now on the account of fictional characters defended in Chapters 3 and 4, that an author uses a name in an act of pretend reference does not suffice for the creation of a fictional character. Rather, there must be some genuinely creative endeavour, where a character is developed. So as long as such development is consistent with not specifying the relevant sortal of Yugo, Everett's objection to the sortal account of fictional singular negative existentials goes through. Of course, for Yugo to develop through the course of a fiction, some things must be said about him. And perhaps in the saying of those things, it will emerge that there is some substance sortal that Yugo is characterized as falling under, even if this is not done explicitly. Perhaps it will emerge through the telling of Yugo's adventures that he is a person or an animal, or simply an animate being.[99] So if Everett's counterexample is to go through, he needs to flesh out the example a bit more. Perhaps this can be done. But as, we shall now show, it does not need to be done in order to show that Sortal 1 is inadequate.

As Everett himself notes, Sortal 1 is subject to possible counterexample when we consider fictional characters that it is conceded on all sides do exist. For example, if some fiction characterized Napoleon as a robot, this would be sufficient, according to Sortal 1, to underwrite the claim that Napoleon does not exist, but such a claim, ignoring issues of tense, is false.

Even sticking with merely fictional characters, Sortal 1 is inadequate. Noting the infelicities of Yagisawa's presentation of his objection against the sortal account, Brock offers the following on Yagisawa's behalf:

> In The Simpsons, Bart and Homer are real people, but Itchy and Scratchy are merely fictional characters. In South Park, Stan and Kyle are boys, but Terrance and Phillip are fictional characters. Creationists, then, [of the type under examination] will be committed to saying that Itchy, Scratchy, Terrance, and Phillip are all ascribed and literally have the property of being

[99] 'Animate being' is not usually classified as a substance sortal, and under plausible assumptions, it cannot be that both 'animal' and 'person' are substance sortals. Let's ignore these niceties here. The important point is that not just any old sortal will do, even if it need not be a substance sortal.

> a fictional character. As such these characters present a counterexample to the first [sortal] realist paraphrase presented above. When we say that Itchy and Scratchy do not exist, presumably we do not mean that there is no such fictional character as Itchy or Scratchy (Brock 2010: 345 n5).

Brock's point relies on the claim that for the realist, fictionally fictional characters, such as Itchy and Scratchy, are themselves fictional characters which exist, and are thus on a par with fictional characters such as Homer Simpson. This is a claim realists ought to accept, since the reason we have for thinking that Homer Simpson is a creation of Matt Groening and his team carry over, mutatis mutandis, to thinking Itchy and Scratchy are also creations of Groening et al. Interestingly, it seems, Yagisawa does not accept this claim himself. When discussing his case of boojams, he writes that "creationists maintain that boojams exist (assuming that boojams are indeed genuinely fictional individuals, i.e., they are real rather than fictional, according to the relevant story)" (Yagisawa 2001: 169). And Everett explicitly rejects that fictionally fictional characters are fictional characters:

> Consider a fiction S in which one of the characters C writes stories and so creates fictional characters. Now these are not, presumably, real fictional characters like Raskolnikov. They are not the real creations of real authors. Rather they are merely fictional fictional characters. (Everett 2007: 70).

But why would one think that fictional fictional characters were not the creations of authors?[100] A fictional fictional character, could, for all that has been said, be more developed than any of the other fictional characters in a story, more central to the plot, more loved by the public etc. Of course the fictional fictional characters of fictions are not presented as real, unlike other fictional characters, but what is the metaphysical import of this? As we saw in Chapter 4 when discussing the alleged indeterminate identity of fictional characters, Everett seems to be overly impressed by how a fictional character is characterized in a story. But just

[100] Everett seems to be assuming that writing a story is sufficient for creating fictional characters "one of the characters C writes stories and so creates fictional characters." But as we argued in Chapter 3, this is not the case: one can write a story without thereby creating any fictional characters. If, for example, the outer fiction S contains only general descriptions of the story written by C, then, on our account, the author of the fiction didn't thereby create further fictional entities. So just as it can be fictionally the case that there is a man, without there being a corresponding fictional character, it can be fictionally the case that it is fictionally the case without there being a fictional fictional character. But let us ignore this in what follows.

as with Napoleon and London, how a fictional character really is, is not a matter of how a story says it is.

As well as relying on the claim that fictional fictional characters are on a par with fictional characters, a Brock-style objection to Sortal 1 also requires that fictional character is a substance sortal or equivalent, otherwise his case is irrelevant to Sortal 1. On the creationism argued for here, fictional character is, in the relevant sense, not a phase sortal, a sortal that something can fall under at one time, but fail to fall under at another. This is not the case with Platonic theories of fictional characters, which have it that fictional characters are eternal and become fictional once they are selected by authors. Indeed, Platonists appeal to this feature of their account to try to explain our creationist talk about fictional characters.[101] But on our creationist metaphysics, fictional character is a substance sortal: it applies to an object at one time, if it applies to it at any time; fictional characters are essentially fictional characters; and 'is a fictional character' is the appropriate answer to the question 'what is it?' asked of the abstract object Sherlock Holmes (Wiggins (2001: Chapter 1)). So despite Yagisawa's and Everett's reservations, Brock's counterexample to Sortal 1 is decisive, and so the realist will have to look elsewhere for his paraphrase.[102]

A different type of sortalist account has it, not that what is conveyed is that the fictional character is not of certain sort, but rather that it is of a certain sort. A proposal that Everett (2007: 70) considers on the realist's behalf is

[101] On Timothy Williamson's (1998) necessitarianism, necessarily everything exists necessarily, and so necessarily everything exists eternally. On such a metaphysics, which allows that the concrete could have been non-concrete and vice versa, the notions of substance sortal and essentialism need rethinking. As Williamson notes (1996b: 168) although no porcupine is necessarily a porcupine, it is consistent with Williamson's necessitarianism that necessarily every porcupine is a porcupine if concrete. In this sense then, porcupine is a substance sortal. It is not clear, however, how Williamson would allow fictional character to be a substance sortal, since fictional characters are, in the relevant sense, necessarily non-concrete. Like all eternalists about fictional characters, Williamson has to reinterpret our creationist talk about fictional characters. It is not clear, however, that this is an extra cost of his theory given that he has to reinterpret our creationist talk about artefacts in general.

[102] We are obviously using 'fictional character' here, so that Napoleon is not a fictional character, despite the fact that he was written about in *War and Peace*. If Napoleon is a fictional character in this sense, then obviously fictional character is a phase sortal and not a substance sortal. There is obviously such a use of 'fictional character', the only question is whether there is a use of 'fictional character' which applies to Napoleon. The felicity of 'some characters in *War and Peace* exist whilst others do not' *indicates*, that perhaps there is, although the infelicity of 'some *fictional* characters in *War and Peace* exist whilst others do not' indicates that perhaps there is not.

Sortal 2: An utterance of ‘‘a does not exist’’ can be used to convey the claim that a is a fictional object

Everett rejects this because he thinks that according to Sortal 2, ‘fictional objects don’t exist’, “would convey the trivial logical truth that fictional objects are fictional objects” (Everett 2007: 70), and presumably the thought is that ‘fictional objects do not exist’ is not a trivial logical truth. But Everett’s claim does not immediately follow from Sortal 2 unless what is implied by a sentence S is also implied by the logical consequences of S. But presumably what Everett has in mind is that the natural extension of Sortal 2 to general sentences such as ‘fictional characters do not exist’ has it that this conveys the trivial logical truth. If Everett is incorrect that this is what is intended by our hypothetical realist, then her account is incomplete. But as we have shown already, generalizations are not where the action is. If we can give an account of the particular case, then it is likely we can give an account of the resulting generalization. But consider

(45) The fictional object Sherlock Holmes’s violin does not exist.

The natural extension of Sortal 2 to (45) has it that this conveys the trivial claim that the fictional object Sherlock Holmes’s violin is a fictional object.[103] But this is not trivial.

3.2 Descriptivist Accounts

The descriptivist account of fictional singular negative existentials has also proved popular amongst realists (see van Inwagen (1977 and Salmon (1998: 303–4), Adams and Fuller (2007)). The proposal is

Descriptivist 1: An utterance of ‘a does not exist’ can be used to convey the claim that nothing has all the properties ascribed to a in the relevant fiction

But this claim is no good for the reason that Yagisawa gave and which was made by Saul Kripke in his John Locke Lectures (1974): ‘a does not exist’ is not true if it turns out that

[103] This would not be a trivial claim if ‘fictional object’ were ambiguous but this is not the case for the realist we are considering.

something did have all the properties ascribed to a, since this coincidence is irrelevant to the claim made by the singular negative existential.

Similarly, Descriptivist 1 also faces the converse problem. Any story about a real person which misdescribes them, would erroneously license the claim that they do not exist.

Finally, as Everett (2007: 72) points out, Descriptivist 1 faces a third problem

(46) Even though Hamlet doesn't exist there is a real person who had all the properties attributed to Hamlet in Hamlet

is not contradictory or infelicitous, but if Descriptivist 1 were true, this would not be the case.

Here, then, are three counterexamples to Descriptivist 1. But this does not show that no descriptivist approach can work. Here I consider the two obvious modifications to Descriptivist 1.

We saw above that Descriptivism 1 failed in the face of the Kripkean objection, since even if something had all the properties ascribed to a, it would not be a. This suggests that the realist needs to build $\lambda x.\ x=a$ into the proposal. Salmon (1998: 303-4) considers such an approach

> Descriptivist 2: An utterance of 'a does not exist' can be used to convey the claim that nothing is both a and has all the properties ascribed to a in the relevant fiction

Everett (2007: 71 n23) notes that Descriptivist 2 avoids the Kripkean objection presented above, as a singular negative existential is not falsified by anything satisfying the relevant descriptive material, but only by a satisfying the descriptive material. Everett says in passing that although Descriptivist 2 is not subject to the first counterexample to descriptivist 1, it is subject to the second and third counterexamples to Descriptivist 1. It is hard to see, however, how sentences like (46) can create a problem for Descriptivist 2.

What about the relevant third objection from Everett? The relevant sentence to consider is

(47) Even though Hamlet doesn't exist there is a real person who is both Hamlet and had all the properties attributed to Hamlet in Hamlet.

This sentence, unlike (46), does jar, just as Descriptivist 2 predicts. So Everett (2007: 71 n23) is wrong to claim that Descriptivist 2 is just as subject to this criticism as Descriptivist 1. But what about the second counterexample to Descriptivist 1, is this problematic for Descriptivist 2?

Here there is a dilemma for the advocate of Descriptivist 2. Let us say that there is a story in which an author writes about a pre-existing fictional character, *a*. This story could say that *a* was created by its author, is well-crafted, is a fictional character, is talked about by philosophers, etc. But if *a* is in extra-fictional reality all of these things then 'a does not exist' comes out as false according to Descriptivist 2. Intuitively, I think this is the correct verdict as it is akin to novels which write about existent concrete objects. So if the proponent of descriptivism agrees, so far, so good, if not, then we can reject Descriptivist 2. But now let us say that our story misdescribes *a* slightly. According to Descriptivist 2, 'a does not exist' is now true. But our intuitions do not track the accuracy of how this realist says the abstract fictional object is portrayed. If we get ourselves into a mind-set where we reject the negative existential when the story is accurate, then we shall think the negative existential false, even if the object is misdescribed. Of course the realist will say that, there is a sense in which we are mistaken in thinking that a does not exist, but again this goes for fictional characters across the board; this case is not something special. Any account which delivers the verdict that fictional singular negative existentials track the accuracy of representations is inadequate. So if a story like the one sketched above is possible, and we have seen no reason why it is not, Descriptivist 2 is to be rejected. As noted above, the presence of a story about a non-fictional existing object which misdescribes it, is not sufficient for the corresponding negative existential. But why should it be in any different in the case of fictional objects which are ontologically on a par with non-fictional objects? In any case, Descriptivist 2 is no better at handling the second objection to descriptivist approaches than Descriptivist 1.

The third descriptivist proposal modifies Descriptivist 1 in a different direction to Descriptivist 2

Descriptivist 3: An utterance of 'a does not exist' can be used to convey the claim that nothing has all and only the properties ascribed to a in the relevant fiction.

If, coincidentally something has all and only the properties ascribed to a by a fiction, then this would still be irrelevant to the negative existential, unless one of the properties ascribed were $\lambda x.\ x=a$ since this object would not be a. Similarly, if a fiction misdescribes an existing object, say, President Obama, this does not suffice for the object's nonexistence, by hypothesis. How a novel says Obama is, and how Obama is are two quite different things. Finally,

(48) Even though Hamlet doesn't exist there is a real person who had all and only the properties attributed to Hamlet in Hamlet

is just as acceptable as (46), and so Descriptivist 3 cannot be correct.

But is it possible, even in principle, for an object to have all and only the properties ascribed to a by a fiction? Let's say the relevant fiction ascribes the bundle of properties B to an a, and that some object x instantiates B. Clearly x has all the properties ascribed to a by the fiction, but it does not have only those properties, for it has the property of being ascribed B, and even if this were in B, then x would have the property of being ascribed being ascribed B and so on. So in order for x to have only the properties ascribed to a, a would have to be ascribed a property which ensured that all a's properties are closed under ascription.

The final descriptivist proposal merges Descriptivist 2 and 3:

Descriptivist 4: An utterance of 'a does not exist' can be used to convey the claim that nothing is both a and has all and only the properties ascribed to a in the relevant fiction.

Like Descriptivist 2, Descriptivist 4 addresses the Kripkean concern and Everett's third worry, as

(49) Even though Hamlet doesn't exist there is a real person who is both Hamlet and had all and only the properties attributed to Hamlet in Hamlet

jars as much as (46).

But Descriptivist 4 does nothing to address the worry from misdescribing existent non-fictional objects.[104]

3.3 Metalinguistic Accounts

I argued in Chapter 2 that the Meinongian and the realist are, in some ways, semantically conservative, but that they contravene the tight link between singular negative existentials and failures of reference. This observation paved the way for Russellian metalinguistic approaches to singular negative existentials that we argued were inadequate. But realists (Thomasson 2003; van Inwagen 2000, 2003) about fictional characters have also given metalinguistic accounts of singular negative existentials, and so this is a paraphrase strategy overlooked by Yagisawa. I shall argue, however, that these accounts are as unsuccessful as the Russellian's.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Donnellan's (1974 23-25) proposal is:

> If N is a proper name that has been used in predicative statements with the intention to refer to some individual, then 'N does not exist' is true if and only if the history of those uses ends in a block, where a 'block' is defined thus: when the historical explanation of the use of a name (with the intention to refer) ends … with events that preclude any referent being identified, I will call it a 'block' in the history.

Thomasson's realist metalinguistic approach is that

> ''Holmes does not exist'' is true just in case the historical chain of use of the name does not lead back to a baptism of a person, but instead (only) to a

[104] Given that there are non-fictional nonexistents, descriptivist proposals also face the worries discussed in 3.4.

> story, myth, or similar representation (what Keith Donnellan calls a 'block') Thomasson (2003: 141).

As Everett (2007: 73) notes, it is not clear that appealing to a Donnellan-style block helps the realist since it is perfectly possible that the historical chain of use associated with our uses of a fictional name does identify a referent, namely the fictional object. Everett suggests the realist could avoid this problem by arguing that fictional names are empty when initially introduced by the author, but that they subsequently come to refer to the fictional character. But Everett points out that this manoeuvre will not help the realist:

> there could be cases where a name initially referred to nothing when first introduced but then underwent a reference shift so that it came to refer to a nonfictional object. The name ''Smadagascar'' might, for example, be initially introduced as the name of a fictional place in a story but through a process of mistakes and misunderstandings it might end up referring to a real African island. In these sorts of cases, at least if we adopt Donnellan's account of negative existentials, we would not want to say that the history of use associated with the name ''Smadagascar'' ended in a block just because the name lacked a referent when initially introduced. For if we did, then given Donnellan's account of negative existentials, we would have to count ''Smadagascar doesn't exist'' as true whereas it would be false. (Everett 2007: 73-74)

In any case, Thomasson's notion of a block is not quite the same as Donnellan's, so perhaps the realist can avail herself of this distinct notion. But this proposal too faces a version of Everett's objection above. Since 'Smadagascar' originates in a fiction, 'Smadagascar doesn't exist' is incorrectly counted as true.

The realist, however, could respond to Everett by distinguishing between different names: 'Smadagascar$_1$' is initially introduced in a fiction and does not refer or refers to a fictional character, whereas 'Smadagascar$_2$' refers to a real place. Only 'Smadagascar$_1$' can be traced back to a block, and so only 'Smadagascar$_1$' can be used in true negative existentials. But in order to be plausible, the realist would have to deny that *reference-shifts* of the type Everett describes are impossible, and that the scenario that Everett describes is properly described as

the introduction of a new name. This could be defended by appealing to the slogans 'different meaning different name', and 'different referent different meaning'.

This response rules out allowing that fictional names initially fail to refer and then come to refer to a fictional character later on, although it does allow that fictional names are ambiguous, which is the proposal defended in Chapters 3 and 5. So to be offering a distinctive proposal, the realist who responds in this way is committed to fictional names referring to fictional characters period. This realist could then appeal to Thomasson's notion of a block and provide a metalinguistic account of fictional singular negative existentials. Everett's Smadagascar case would not provide a counterexample since it would involve a distinct name.

Everett points out that Thomasson's notion of a block is independently problematic, however, since "stories may introduce new names for real people and places. Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* introduces the name ''Kakania'' to refer to Austria and David Lodge's novels introduce the name ''Rummidge'' for Birmingham". (Everett 2007: 74).

The obvious response is for Thomasson to amend her account to block such counterexamples. Everett (2007: 74) suggests the following on her behalf:

> Everett Block: The history of use associated with a name counts as ending in a block if that name was (i) introduced in a story or myth, (ii) didn't refer to anything when it was introduced, and (iii) didn't change reference.

But as we noted above, in order for the realist to overcome Everett's Smadagascar counterexample, they had to maintain that fictional names do refer to something when introduced, namely the corresponding fictional character. So the realist can adopt Everett's proposal if she is to avoid both types of counterexample.

Before we consider how this type of realist will respond to Everett's observation about names introduced in fiction for existing non-fictional objects, we should pause to look at why Everett thinks that Everett Block is no good for the realist. Everett rejects Everett Block because he thinks it will not do when one fictional name is introduced to name a pre-existing fictional character.

> Suppose, for example, I wrote a story and introduced the name ‘‘πιγλετ’’ for one of my characters, directly stipulating that it is to refer to piglet. Now the abstract object theorist is committed to regarding piglet as a genuine object. And I introduced the name ‘‘πιγλετ’’ to refer to piglet. So on the current suggestion the abstract object theorist seems committed to holding that the history of use associated with ‘‘πιγλετ’’ does not end in a block but is rather rooted in a real object. So, given the truth conditions Donnellan suggests for negative existentials, ‘‘πιγλετ does not exist’’ will be counted false. But since piglet does not exist we will presumably want to count ‘‘πιγλετ does not exist’’ as true. And the current suggestion does not allow us to do this. (Everett 2007: 74).

Now as stated, Everett Block provides only a sufficient condition for a block, and not a necessary condition, so it is open to the realist supplement Everett's suggestion, but let us ignore this in what follows.

We should note, before considering Everett's objection, that the conditions for resulting in a block are the conditions satisfied by empty fictional names as considered in Chapters 3 and 5. On our view the names of merely fictional characters, when introduced in a fiction are empty and do not shift reference. Given the account of fictional negative existentials defended above, we are committed to saying that

(50) πιγλετ does not exist

is false. That is, the fictional names that are used in true fictional negative existentials are ones that are empty and are introduced in fictional contexts. So if Everett is correct that this is the incorrect verdict, Everett's πιγλετ example is a counterexample to our proposed treatment of fictional singular negative existentials.[105]

[105] Note that if a realist allows that a fictional name refers to a fictional character and wants to appeal to Everett Block, then he must allow that fictional names are ambiguous, which is the view that we defend. As such it does not represent a distinctive view, although the metalinguistic account of fictional singular negative existentials is distinct from our proposal.

Everett's argument is based on the contention that we ought to count (50) as true. Now Everett is conceding, for the sake of argument, that fictional characters, conceived of as abstract objects do exist, and that 'πιγλετ' refers to such an object. So it is hard, given this set up, to deny that (50) is false. What is true is that we do think that singular negative existentials such as 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' are true, but this is importantly different from (50) on the present account, since 'πιγλετ', but not 'Sherlock Holmes' refers to an object. In this sense then, (50) is similar to

(51) Napoleon does not exist

And is even more like

(52) Kakania does not exist

which are both false. Of course, someone like Everett who does not believe that there are fictional objects would think that (50) was true if presented with it, but someone who did not believe in the existence of numbers would think that 'π does not exist' is likewise true. So Everett's objection fails.

One way of helping to see this, is by considering the distinct ways in which a fictional character can get into a fiction that we delineated in Chapter 3. There we noted that one way in which a fictional character can get into a fiction, is the same way that ordinary objects get into fictions, namely by being referred to. This is not the usual case to be sure, but it is possible. Everett's example exploits this way a character can get into fiction. But once we notice that this is exactly the same sense in which Napoleon is a character in *War and Peace* we should not accept (50).

Returning to the realist who denies the ambiguity of fictional names. Such a realist, I noted above, cannot appeal to Everett Block if they want to avoid Everett's Smadagascar counterexample. The obvious replacement is

> Everett Block*: The history of use associated with a name counts as ending in a block if that name was (i) introduced in a story or myth, (ii) referred to a fictional character when it was introduced, and (iii) didn't change reference.

But Everett Block* is no good because it gives the verdict that 'πιγλετ does not exist' is true. Note that, for the realist who thinks that fictional names always refer to fictional characters, the reason for denying the truth of this negative existential is not the same as I gave above for those who accept the polysemy of fictional names. Rather, they must reject that πιγλετ does not exist since it is stipulated that 'πιγλετ' refers to piglet. This is unlike the usual case where fictional names come to refer to fictional characters through the writing of fictions. If we stipulate that 'πιγλετ' refers to piglet, then once we are aware of the stipulation, we would not be inclined to accept the negative existential, just as, if we stipulate that our use of 'ip' in a fiction is to refer to pi, we would not accept 'ip does not exist'.

Our realist then must distinguish between fictional names that name pre-existing fictional objects, and those fictional names that do not. This suggests the following

> Everett Block**: The history of use associated with a name counts as ending in a block if that name was (i) introduced in a story or myth, (ii) referred to a fictional character which did not pre-date its use, and (iii) didn't change reference.

Everett Block**, is, I think, extensionally correct. However, it is quite complicated and our route to it was even more complicated. It is simply not plausible that it is either the proposition expressed or a proposition conveyed by a fictional singular negative existential. The realists' search for extensional adequacy has robbed his claim to plausibility, and so a metalinguistic account based on Everett Block** is to be rejected. (Also remember the strategic problems with denying the truth of fictional singular negative existentials or offering deviant truth conditions for them).

Thomasson (2004) advocates a different type of metalinguistic account:

> If N is a proper name that has been used in predicative statements with the intention to refer to some entity of ontological kind K then ‘‘N does not exist’’ is true iff the history of those uses does not meet the conditions for referring to an entity of kind K.

But this account is no good for the realist either. Let’s distinguish two readings of Thomasson’s proposal. On the first reading, intention takes narrow scope, so that Thomasson’s proposal requires that there be some entity of kind K which is the intended referent of N. This reading yields the wrong results when I use ‘Obama’ picked up from my politically aware friends, under the misapprehension that it refers to a mountain. In such a case ‘Obama does not exist’ is false, in virtue of the existence of the man, despite the history of ‘Obama’ not meeting the conditions for referring to a mountain.

This is the type of case Everett has in mind when rejects Thomasson’s account as inadequate:

> suppose that I introduce the name ‘‘w’’ to refer to Conan Doyle but you think that it refers to one of his fictional characters and you use ‘‘w’’ in predicative statements with the intention of referring to that fictional character. If [Thomasson] were correct then it would be appropriate for me to correct you by uttering ‘‘w does not exist’’ and in making such an utterance I would count as having said something true. However surely the opposite is the case (Everett 2007: 75).

On the second reading, intention takes wide scope, so that one intends to (refer to some x of K kind), with K featuring in the content of the intention. But this reading is also subject to counterexample. Suppose I own a plant which I suppose mistakenly is an artefact, and I call it Boris, intending thereby to pick out an artificial plant. Thomasson’s account would seem to make true the claim that Boris does not exist. But this is not true. What this brings out is that Thomasson is falsely assuming that being correct about the kind of an object is a precondition of reference to it (Campbell (2002)).

Moreover, neither authors nor (most) others using fictional names are trying to refer to anything of a salient ontological kind. When Conan Doyle used ‘Sherlock Holmes’ he was not trying to refer to a man, but rather was pretending to refer to a man. The same goes for you or I. Most people realize that fictional names, on the intended interpretation, are empty,

and so are not trying to refer to anything, and so a fortiori not to anything of kind K. Thomasson would have been better off formulating her condition in terms of pretend reference and without the reliance on intention. But then Thomasson will face the problems of the sortalist. That is, when an author uses a fictional name, 'a', to pretendedly refer to a fictional character, the revised version of Thomasson's suggestion will erroneously predict that 'a does not exist is false.

The obvious metalinguistic accounts are extensionally inadequate or too complicated to be plausible, as was the case with the other paraphrase strategies we have considered. But there is a non-paraphrase strategy that the realist can employ. As such it is not subject to the strategic worries that we highlighted at the outset of our discussion. Nevertheless, the approach fails.

3.4 The Varying Extension of 'Exists'

On the construal of fictional names defended in Chapters 3 and 5, fictional singular negative existentials are ambiguous, having a true reading when the fictional name is empty, and having a false reading when the fictional name refers to a fictional character. The realist who rejects the polysemy of fictional names cannot help herself to this strategy to account for true functional singular negative existentials. But we should note that there is another way in which such negative existential sentences could be ambiguous or vary in truth value, namely, if 'exists' is itself ambiguous or varies in extension. And the realist who rejects the polysemy of fictional names can help herself to this way of accounting for true fictional singular negative existentials. Both the account of Chapter 5 and this proposed realist strategy say that there are two readings of fictional singular negative existentials due to the varying extension of one of the terms in the sentence. The difference is that where we trace the variation in extension to the fictional name, the present realist account traces it to 'exists'.

The first realist strategy along these lines claims that 'exists' is ambiguous, so that

(2) Sherlock Holmes does not exist

has both a false reading, where it says of the abstract object Sherlock Holmes, that it does not $exist_1$ and a true reading where it says of the abstract object that it does not $exist_2$, where to $exist_1$ is to be one of everything and to $exist_2$ is to be explicated in different terms.

On this strategy, the realist sees (2) as akin to

(53) Goldman Sachs is not a bank.

(53) has a false reading, where to be a $bank_1$ is to be a particular type of financial institution, and a true reading, where to be a $bank_2$ is to be appropriately situated with respect to a body of water.[106]

The second realist implementation of this strategy is similar in that it takes the extension of 'exists' to vary, but this time the variation is due to context-sensitivity, rather than ambiguity. On this model (2) is analogous to

(54) Peter is not over there

which can have a false reading, if 'there' specifies a location at which Peter is at, and a true reading if 'there' specifies a location where Peter is not present.

Everett argues that either realist strategy faces the same kinds of problems as the realist who takes fictional names to be ambiguous. As we saw in Chapter 5, however, Everett's claims about syllepsis are overblown, since the test for ambiguity which he in effect employs, is not decisive. Moreover, the realist has a nice explanation of why we have systematic polysemy in the case of fictional names. So, at the outset, we should be wary of Everett's claims that the realist strategies under consideration here are problematic. But let us examine Everett's argument and see if it fails in the predicate case as it did in the singular term case.

Everett asks us to consider the following seemingly true claim

[106] The ambiguity in (53) is mere homonymy. The realist is not committed to saying the same about the supposed ambiguity in (2); they could take the ambiguity to be polysemy or mere homonymy. Indeed, given Kripke's (1977) test for ambiguity, we have reason to think 'exists' if ambiguous is polysemous since we would not expect to find the different senses of 'exist' to be lexicalized in different ways in some languages.

(55) Bush exists but Raskolnikov doesn't exist,

and its VP-elision, which also sounds true:

(56) Bush exists but Raskolnikov doesn't.

Everett claims that if 'exists' is ambiguous, then the elided version, (56), should sound forced or humorous like the contractions

(57) *Sometimes she took counsel and sometimes tea
(58) *The politician's ratings fell and so did the clumsy rock-climber,

but it doesn't, and so we should conclude that 'exists' is not ambiguous.

Similarly, Everett argues that if 'exists' is context sensitive, then 'exists' in (56) needs to be able to do semantic double duty, but Everett claims that when we elide contextually-sensitive VPs, we find they cannot do double duty. For example, Everett notes that the two context-sensitive VPs in (59) can have different semantic values, corresponding to two different groups of people demonstrated

(59) Mary is one of them but Sally is not one of them

But we cannot make the same claim with the elided version

(60) Mary is one of them but Sally isn't.

That is, in (60), 'is one of them' cannot play the dual semantic role that 'exists' is required to play in (56).

The VP-elision test for ambiguity/context-sensitivity that Everett employs is similar to the conjunction reduction test for ambiguity that we considered in connection with singular terms in Chapter 5. But just as we can apply the conjunction reduction test to singular terms, we can also apply it to predicates. Indeed, Sennet (2011) provides an illustration of the test using 'exists':

(61) Toronto exists.

(62) Numbers exist.

(63) Triadic relations exist.

(64) Toronto and numbers and triadic relations exist.

Sennet notes that 'exist' has been claimed to be ambiguous, but that it does not display the syllepsis which the conjunction reduction test for ambiguity predicts for ambiguous terms, as witnessed by the felicity of (64). So instead of an elision test, Everett could have argued that 'exists' is not ambiguous on the basis of the conjunction reduction test.

Sennet himself is not endorsing the claim that (64) shows that 'exist' is unambiguous since he notes that "[i]f a term can be ambiguous but in a way so subtle that people miss it, then the zeugma [syllepsis] might not be noticeable". And as we argued in Chapter 5 this can indeed be the case for singular terms. That is, conjunction reduction fails as a test for the ambiguity of singular terms, although we did not consider it as a test for context-sensitivity. It is clear, however, that conjunction-reduction fails as a test for the context-sensitivity of singular terms. The following cases show that we can have context-sensitive singular terms doing linguistic double duty in the case of complex demonstratives and personal pronouns:[107]

(65) That game is very hard to learn but lasts only five minutes

(66) They were brought in this morning and were very popular in 17th Century England.

What is hard to learn are the rules of the game, but what takes five minutes is an activity. What were brought in this morning were chair tokens, but what was popular are chair types.

But that conjunction reduction fails as a test for the ambiguity or context-sensitivity of singular terms does not show that it fails as a test for the ambiguity or context-sensitivity of predicates. Similarly, it does not show that the ellipsis test for ambiguity or context-sensitivity fails.

[107] It is not clear what the context-sensitivity of names, in the sense of context-sensitivity under discussion, would amount to, and so they are omitted from discussion under the topic of context-sensitivity.

In any case, we should note that (57) and (58) do not have the same form as (56) and (64), so it is not immediately clear what lessons can be learnt from the fact that (57) and (58) sound off. But we can construct examples that mirror the structure of (56) more accurately to make Everett's point. Consider the following example adapted from Zwicky and Saddock (1975: 19). The following has four readings generated from the two meanings of 'called Jane an ambulance'[108]

(67) Sally called Jane an ambulance but Bob didn't call Jane an ambulance

But the VP-elided version only has a single reading:

(68) Sally called Jane an ambulance but Bob didn't

Moreover, even polysemous terms are counted as ambiguous by the VP-elision test as this example from Barker (2006) shows

(69) *Bill waved, and the flag did too

Unlike in the case of conjunction reduction for singular terms, we do not have any counterexamples to the conjunction reduction and VP-elision tests for ambiguity in the case of predicates. But the failure of the conjunction reduction test for ambiguity in the case of singular terms demonstrates that the principle behind the VP elision test, that linguistic items cannot play a dual role, is false. So it would be hasty to conclude with Everett, that 'exists' is not ambiguous. Nevertheless, Everett has provided some evidence against the ambiguity claim.

What about Everett's employment of elision tests for context-sensitivity? As Everett himself notes, we do sometimes get the 'sloppy readings' required by the realist. That is, both

(70) Bill loves his mum and Stan loves his mum

and

[108] A joke that has stayed with me since my childhood: A – call this man an ambulance, B – This man's an ambulance, this man's an ambulance.

(71) Bill loves his mum and so does Stan

can be read so as to say that Stan loves Bill's mum and that Stan loves Stan's mum, so context-sensitive terms can do linguistic double duty. "The question, then, is whether we can understand ''exists'' in an analogous manner and [(56)] as a case of sloppy identity" (Everett 2007: 61). Everett is sceptical since 'sloppy readings' like the available one of (71) involve explicitly anaphoric devices in their surface form, where (56) does not.

But this is not essential to the phenomena of 'sloppy readings'. As the following example shows:

(72) John went to a local bar and Bob went to a local bar
(73) John went to a local bar and so did Bob.

Both (72) and (73) can be read as saying that Bob went to a bar local to John or to a bar local to Bob. So here we have an example of a context-sensitive VP which does not employ explicitly anaphoric devices which can do linguistic double duty, and so the VP-elision test, in its present form, does not tell against the realist's claim that 'exists' is context-sensitive.

Similarly,

(74) John and Bob went to a local bar

has two readings and so the conjunction reduction test does not tell against the current realist proposal of invoking context-sensitivity.

But Everett has a better argument against the realist's strategy. Consider

(75) Bush exists but Raskolnikov and the round square don't

which sounds perfectly felicitous. Now consider the following sentence

(76) John went to a local bar, but Barry and James did not

(76) admits of a strict reading which says Barry and James did not go to a bar local to John, and a sloppy reading which says they did not go to a bar local to themselves. But we cannot get a mixed reading which says that James did not go to a bar local to John, whereas Barry did not go to a bar local to himself (cf. Zwicky and Saddock (1975: 22). The problem for the context-sensitivity of 'exists' is that

> We cannot take [(75)] as denying the existence of the round square in the sense that it affirms the existence of Bush while denying the existence of Raskolnikov in some other, contextually determined, sense. Rather we must rather [sic] take it as denying the existence of Raskolnikov in exactly the same sense that it denies the existence of the round square. Now the round square is not a fictional object so presumably [(75)] must deny the existence of the round square in the ordinary sense, in the sense that excludes the round square from our ontology. Consequently [(75)] must also deny Raskolnikov's existence in this sense, excluding Raskolnikov from our ontology. But [(75)] is intuitively true. Hence, it seems, even if we try to understand [(56)] as a case of sloppy identity, this will not save the Contextual Thesis (Everett 2007: 61).

Now the way Everett puts things, actually underplays the force of this argument. For all Everett says, we should see the observation concerning (75) and (76) as underlying an explanatory challenge for the realist: elucidate a sense of 'exists' such that it is true that Raskolnikov does not exist and the round square does not exist in this sense. But for any sense of 'exist' it is plausible that the round square does not exist. Assuming a Russellian analysis of definite descriptions, we can illustrate the point as follows. Regardless of the extension of 'E', the following is true

(77) $\sim\exists x\, RSx \,\&\, \forall y\, RSy \supset x=y \,\&\, Ex$

So no matter how the realist elucidates 'exists', he can account for the truth of (75), without having to appeal to an implausible 'mixed reading'.

But we should not view the data in this way. The point is that on the intended understanding of (75), we are to be taken as saying that the round square does not exist in exactly the same sense that we affirm Bush's existence, that is, it does not exist tout court. If so, then given the unavailability of mixed readings, we must be denying the existence of Rasknolnikov in exactly the same way, and so the realist's claim that 'exists' is context-sensitive fails.

In addition to conjunction reduction and ellipsis tests for ambiguity, there is also Quine's (1960) contradiction test for ambiguous predicates (See Chapter 5). Since 'bank' is ambiguous, we can truthfully say

(78) That bank isn't a bank.

That is because the first occurrence of 'bank' need not have the same extension as the second occurrence of 'bank', so (78) need not express a contradiction. But where the extension cannot vary, sentences of the form of (78) are contradictory as in

(79) *She is an aunt but she isn't an aunt

So by the contradiction test, if 'exists' is ambiguous, then we ought to be able to say truthfully

(80) Sherlock Holmes exists but does not exist.

But we cannot. And so, by the contradiction test 'exists' is not ambiguous.

Can we use the contradiction test to test for context sensitivity? We can very well say

(81) Simon is her son but not her son

by demonstrating two different women. So the contradiction test predicts context-sensitive terms do not result in contradictions. This is apparently bad news for the realist who claims that 'exists' is context-sensitive. But note that we cannot say

(82) Joe's is a local bar but not a local bar

so the contradiction test fails in full generality as a test for context-sensitivity. And if ‘exists’ is context-sensitive, it is presumably more like ‘local’ than ‘her son’, as its extension is not determined anaphorically or in a straightforward demonstrative fashion. So the fact that ‘exists’ results in contradiction, does not tell against ‘exists’ being context-sensitive.

So it seems that the contradiction test tells against ‘exists’ being ambiguous, but not against it being context-sensitive. But we should be cautious. When we applied the contradiction test to an ambiguous term, we chose ‘bank’. Now the two meanings of ‘bank’ are very different. Presumably, the different senses of ‘exists’ are not like that. But when the two meanings of an ambiguous term are similar and largely overlapping, it has been claimed that the contradiction test, as a test for ambiguity, breaks down. To take an example from Sennet (2011)

(83) The police reported that the criminal was apprehended but the police didn't report that the criminal was apprehended

sounds contradictory, even though ‘report’ is ambiguous, having both a factive reading and a non-factive reading, where the factive reading entails the non-factive reading. Sennet explains the contradictoriness of (83) as arising not out of the univocity of ‘report’ but rather from the entailment: if the first occurrence of conjunct entails the negation of the second conjunct, then (83) cannot be true. I am sceptical of such an explanation, since why could it not be that the first occurrence of ‘report’ was the non-factive ‘report’, whereas the second occurrence was the factive ‘report’. If so then there is no contradiction in (83). Nevertheless, if ‘report’ is genuinely ambiguous, then this shows that the contradiction test for ambiguity fails, and so the contradiction test cannot be used to undermine either the claim that ‘exists’ is context-sensitive or that it is ambiguous.

In any case, one might wonder whether the realist’s claim that ‘exists’ varies in extension is an ad hoc proposal designed purely to tackle the problem of fictional singular negative existentials. Is there any independent motivation for positing either ambiguity or context-sensitivity? In Chapter 3, we saw that positing an ambiguity in fictional names was motivated by the dual aspect of our thought and talk about fictional characters. That is, it is the systematic polysemy of fictional names that allows us to capture the perspective from within

the fiction, from without the fiction, and our easy transition between the two. Relatedly, the polysemy of fictional names allows us to do justice to our irrealist and realist intuitions about fictional objects. Does the realist who is a referential monist have anything similar to say?

Of course, by claiming that the extension of 'exists' varies, the realist is trying to do justice to our irrealist and realist judgements, although how far his account goes toward capturing our irrealist thought is questionable. But his account is not motivated by broader considerations to do with fiction. His treatment of 'exists' does not explain our dual perspective on fiction and our ability to move between those perspectives. In that respect, then, if no other, our account is to be preferred as a better motivated and all encompassing theory.

Nevertheless, there is independent motivation for the view that 'exists' is context-sensitive if we think of our first-order existence predicate as denoting the concept $\lambda x.\exists y=x$, or else think of existence in second order terms. As is well documented (Neale (1990), Stanley and Szabó (2000)) the domain over which natural language quantifiers range is contextually determined. Given that we need to appeal to contextually determined quantifier domain restriction independently of questions concerning existence, then we can employ it in giving an account of the varying extension of exists. That is, whilst Sherlock Holmes falls within the range of the existential quantifier when this is unrestricted, he does not fall within the range of the quantifier when it is restricted so as to exclude fictional objects. In this way, the realist can explain why and how 'exists' is context sensitive.

Everett raises the following objection to this proposal:

> I don't think the existence predicate can be plausibly understood as a quantificational expression at the level of LF since our existence predicate cannot be explicitly restricted in the way ordinary quantifiers can. It is acceptable to say ''there is beer in the fridge'' and ''there are books on the shelf'' but odd and infelicitous to say ''beer exists in the fridge'' or ''books exist on the shelf.'' Indeed the existence predicate cannot, for that matter, be implicitly restricted in the way ordinary quantifiers can. Upon opening the fridge and finding no beer it is acceptable to say ''there is no beer'' but infelicitous to say ''beer doesn't exist.'' (Everett 2007: 67).

Everett's objection is far from decisive, however. It is well known that we cannot always substitute co-denoting terms felicitously. As Oliver (2005) notes, the substitution of co-referring terms within complex referring expressions can yield nonsense. For example, replacing 'Dummett' with 'the author of Thought and Reality' in 'Professor Dummett has retired' results in the ungrammatical, *'Professor the author of Thought and Reality has retired'. Secondly, co-referring terms differing in inflection cannot be substituted without loss: 'Me' and 'I' can co-refer in a given context and yet 'I am Alex' is grammatical, whereas, *'Me am Alex' is not. Further, counterexamples can be produced with pre-modifying adjectives: from 'Clever Clive drank most of the wine' we cannot move to *'Clever the shopkeeper drank most of the wine' even though Clive is the shopkeeper. Finally, Gazdar et al (1985: 32) note that even though 'likely' and 'probable' are synonymous, 'probable' is not substitutable in 'Alex is likely to leave', as 'Alex is probable to leave' is ungrammatical. The differing behaviour of 'exists' and existential quantifiers may be explained by syntactic rather than semantic differences, and so Everett's observation does not tell against the present realist proposal.

But now the realist does face a challenge. Although Everett's observation does not tell against construing the existence predicate as related to the existential quantifier, it does tell against, or at least challenge the view that 'exists' is context sensitive in the same way as explicitly quantified noun phrases. That is, although the considerations Everett raises does not undermine the view that 'exists' denotes $\lambda x.\exists y{=}x$, given that we do not seem to be able to restrict the extension of exists in the same way that we can restriction the extension of 'there is' or 'some', the proposed realist explanation of context sensitivity is undermined. More generally, just because two phrases are synonymous, does not mean that they can be manipulated in the same way. So even if we accept that 'exists' denotes $\lambda x.\exists y{=}x$, it does not mean that its quantificational element can be contextually restricted in the same way as 'there is' can be. So the realist's thesis is not independently well-motivated, and so seems an ad hoc response to the problem of fictional singular negative existentials.

4. Conclusion

We saw that by exploiting the independently motivated polysemy of fictional names, the realism advocated here can help itself to the best account of singular negative existentials to account for the truth of claims such as Sherlock Holmes does not exist, its realism notwithstanding. Moreover, the realist is not subject to other forms of the challenge from the nonexistence of fictional characters.

The realist who eschews the polysemy of fictional names, however, cannot advocate the best treatment of singular negative existentials in the fictional case. He must treat fictional singular negative existentials differently from the way in which he treats other seemingly true singular negative existentials. We have argued that this realist faces strategic difficulties and difficulties in the detailed implementation of this strategy. The realist who rejects the polysemy of fictional names has to advocate an ad hoc strategy to deal with fictional singular negative existentials, whether that be by positing an unmotivated ambiguity or context sensitivity in 'exists', a deviant logical form when an obvious one will do, or else by giving up on the truth of fictional singular negative existentials, when there is a well motivated way to accept them as the true claims they appear to be. This then counts in favour of the realist proposal defended here.

Conclusion

We have argued that whatever attitude we take toward whether we should classify empty names and non-empty names together, we need to admit that empty names can contribute to the expression of thoughts if we want to say that some singular negative existentials are true. But once we have done this we open the door to empty names being able to figure in the expression of a whole range of thoughts. Such an admission requires a negative free logic, and a semantics for empty names can be given in a truth-theoretic setting. Once we accept all this, we have a relatively straightforward account of singular negative existentials.

But we also argued that one class of intuitively empty names, fictional names, are associated with corresponding entities, fictional characters. We defended this view as compatible with our irrealist intuitions and with the best account of singular negative existentials. We also outlined and defended a plausible metaphysics of such entities. This account was incomplete to be sure, but we have seen off the most prominent objections against this picture.

Empty names can be given a plausible and coherent treatment, but this does not mean that where we have intuitively empty names, we should also be irrealists about the putative referents of such names. I hope that I have defended one such case where emptiness of name is combined with realism about entities. Whether there are further cases, has not been addressed here.

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