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THE SPEECH ACT OF NAMING IN FICTIONAL DISCOURSE¹

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

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

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) John is hungry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Fiction-Making Theory

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

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

DI: U (the speaker) D 'd in uttering S (where " D " is a term for some directive illocutionary act type, a purporting to be producing a certain kind of obligation on H to do D) iff in uttering S , $U R$ 'd⁴ that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Alice is in the garden,

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

4. The Mill-Frege Theory in Fictional Discourse

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

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

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

- (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect; that procedure has to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further
- (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B. 2) completely.
- (*I*. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (*I*. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

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

5. A Problem for García-Carpintero's Proposal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Alice is in the garden,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let us consider that someone orders me the following:

- (3) Bake the number three!
- (4) Do not asdfgzxcv!

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

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

- (5) asdfgzxcv to smoke sunglasses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Conclusion

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

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