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Article

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FICTIONAL NAMES, PARAFICTIONAL STATEMENTS AND MOVES ACROSS THE BORDER (DISCUSSION WITH FRANÇOIS RECANATI)

SUMMARY: The paper focuses on fictional discourse, discourse about fiction and dynamic relations between them. The immediate impulse came from François Recanati and his recent analysis of parafictional statements (performed by uttering sentences like "In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries"). Confrontation of basic theoretical assumptions concerning functions of fictionals names, status of fictional characters, the role of pretence, etc. (Sections 1 and 2) results in an alternative analysis: unlike Recanati's version, it does not assume the switch to the mode of pretence as an ineliminable part of parafictional statements (3, 4). The author's aim is not to replace one analysis by its rival but to show that the same sentence can be used not only to perform various functions, but also to perform the same (here: parafictional) function in various ways—and generally to demonstrate the variety of language games going on in this sphere (5). Special attention is paid to their specific dynamics, including fluctuation between "serious" and fictional mode of speech and re-evaluations of the status of previous utterances, serving to preserve the continuity of conversation or restore it on a new basis (6).

KEYWORDS: narrative fiction, fictional names, parafictional statements, pretence, mixed discourse.

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This paper was inspired by François Recanati's analysis of a special kind of statements familiar from our discourse about fiction—statements we can make when uttering sentences like

(1_{FO}) In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries,

or simply

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries.

If nothing unexpected happens in the following pages, we will have opportunity to appreciate Recanati's proposal, but this appreciation will not amount to saying that it provides us with *the* correct analysis of what is going on when we use such a sentence to make a parafictional statement. Rather, it will amount to saying that it properly specifies *one of the moves* which may but need not be present in making a parafictional statement by uttering such a sentence. The move consists in a switch to the mode of pretence, serving to *demonstrate* (rather than describe in an uninvolved manner) a portion of pretence prescribed by Conan Doyle's stories to their readers. I will argue that such a move is not necessary and in some cases is either blocked or simply missing due to the circumstances. Obviously, that is not a reason to reject Recanati's analysis in general, in favor of its straightforwardly descriptive rival, which does not include any shift to the mode of pretence, nor any simulation of such a move. Instead, I will suggest to approach both kinds of analysis as showing that one and the same sentence can be used not only to perform various functions,[1] but also to perform the same function in various ways.

Before this happens, we will have to go through some basic assumptions concerning the functions of fictional names in their primary use, i.e., within the texts of narrative fiction, the role of pretence in this sphere, the status of fictional characters etc. (Sections 1 and 2). An interpretation of parafictional uses of sentences like (1_{FO}) or (1), resulting quite straightforwardly from these assumptions, will be confronted with the use of the same sentences within a "parasitic" fictional discourse inspired by Conan Doyle's stories (Section 3). Then we will be in a position to appreciate Recanati's analysis (in Section 4) as a combination of elements recognizable in fictional and parafictional use of sentences like (1_{FO}) or (1), when analyzed in a way suggested in Section 3. The confrontation of both approaches will result in a pluralistic outcome advertised above (Section 5). Then we will pay attention to examples of a dynamic kind of discourse fluctuating be-

[1] As Recanati reminds us, "one and the same sentence containing a fictional name can be used in different ways, just as the fictional name itself can be used in different ways. Thus the same sentence can be fictional in some uses, parafictional in others, metafictional in yet others" (2018, n. 1).

tween parafictional and fictional mode of speech (Section 6). After our appreciation of Recanati's analysis in previous sections, this will serve as another example of the permeability of the border between fictional and "serious" discourse.

1. Fictional Names and the Role of Pretence

Recanati shares the widely (though not commonly) adopted view that the use of a fictional name such as "Sherlock Holmes" within a fictional text does not serve to refer to anything, neither to a real person of flesh and blood nor to an abstract entity. But, as he adds, we can and typically (for good reasons) do pretend that it has a referent and what results from this pretence is "fictitious reference to an ordinary object, rather than genuine reference to a fictitious object" (Recanati, 2021, p. 4).

Outside the fictional context the same name can be used to refer to an abstract artefact, like in the metafictional statement

(0) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by Conan Doyle in 1887.

So far it seems that we are in full agreement concerning the role of pretence with respect to fictional names. However, a closer look shows that this agreement has its limits. For instance, Recanati says:

> According to the simulation view, these names [that is, fictional names used in fictional contexts] do not actually refer to anything. Reference is merely simulated: the author does as if he (or the narrator whose role he is playing) was referring to particular individuals using these names. (2021, p. 14)

The disagreement I have indicated concerns the role of pretence in the author's creative acts. Recanati makes a similar point in various places—here is one concerning assertions: "[t]he author of the fiction pretends to make assertions, i.e., to report facts of which s/he has knowledge" (2021, p. 4).[2] And here is, for comparison, David Lewis' classical formulation to which Recanati appeals: "[s]torytelling is a pretense: the author pretends that what he does is truth-telling about matters whereof the teller has knowledge" (1983, p. 266).

These are just examples of what I take to be a widely shared myth assigning a crucial role to the empirical author's pretence in the constitution of narrative fiction, a myth ratified by the biggest names in the field, including John Searle (e.g., 1975, pp. 327, 331), Gareth Evans (e.g., 1982, p. 353), Stephen Schiffer (e.g.,

[2] In a previous paper on this topic Recanati also speaks about the author's pretended assertions, but then he adds: "[o]r rather: the utterance is presented as made by someone (the fictional narrator) who has knowledge of the fact which the utterance states" (2018, p. 2). This is compatible with the view I defend below. Nevertheless, after this (promising) turn the text continues by speaking about the alleged author's pretending to refer to real individuals.

2003, p. 52), Amie Thomasson (e.g., 2003, p. 149), Saul Kripke (e.g., 2013, p. 17), to mention just a few. I believe, on the contrary, that the author's only relevant achievement, necessary and sufficient for creating a literary work of narrative fiction, consists in writing a text whose literary functions *require response* in the mode of pretence on the part of its readers (see, e.g., Currie, 1990; Friend, 2011; Walton, 1990 for a similar view). On the most general level, the relevant response can be specified as follows:

Scheme (*N*). The literary functions of a text of narrative fiction require that the reader approaches$_{AI}$[3] its sentences as records of utterances of an inhabitant of the real world—the narrator, who tells us what has happened in this world. The role of the reader further includes her assigning$_{AI}$ a priori but not irrevocable credibility to the narrator's utterances.[4]

To create a text requiring and prompting such moves in the mode of pretence (i.e., to write a text of narrative fiction) certainly does not depend on the author's participating in these moves.[5] Nobody will deny that a well-trained liar can produce in his audiences a belief that *p*, without himself believing that *p*. Why not to admit that a writer can deliberately produce in her readers a belief$_{AI}$ that *p* without herself believing$_{AI}$ that *p*? Correlatively, the reader's approaching a text as a piece of narrative fiction does not require the assigning of any kind of pretence to its author: it simply amounts to approaching the text as designed to function in the way specified above.[6]

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[3] The subscript AI attached to a noun, verb or adjective will indicate the mode of pretence or, as I will occasionally say, the *as if* mode. In accordance with widely shared practice, I will use synonymously expressions like: "to pretend to believe that *p*", "to believe$_{AI}$ that *p*" (to be read: to believe that *p* in the *as if* mode), to "make-believe that *p*" and to "imagine that *p*" (in the sense of propositional imagination, rather than mental imagery). This verbal abundance will prove necessary in our reactions to various authors with differing terminological preferences.

[4] It will be withdrawn if the narrator proves to be unreliable in some respect(s); and it will be pointless if the whole picture of the world, presented in the text, will not leave space for anything like facts which could make our utterances true (as is the case, e.g., in Beckett's later prosaic works; cf. Koťátko, 2012; 2016). Needless to say, the requirements specified in *Scheme N* apply solely to narrative fiction in the strict sense and not, for instance, to texts presenting themselves as providing the reader with direct access (unmediated by any narrative performance) to what is going on in somebody's mind (cf. Chatman, 1978, Chapter 4 about "stream of consciousness" and other cases of "nonnarated stories").

[5] No doubt, the author is free to pretend whatever he or she wishes when working on the text. For instance, he can imagine that he is Casanova writing his memoirs (and hence that what he does is "truth-telling about matters whereof he has knowledge"), that the Italian names he uses refer to his real amanti, etc. This might be inspiring but is totally irrelevant for the status of the resulting text.

[6] If we insist that the assumed author's intention is relevant for our approaching her text as a piece of fiction, then it is the intention to produce certain make-believes on the

The assumption$_{AI}$ that the sentences we find in a text of narrative fiction are records of utterances of a real inhabitant of our world (the narrator), telling us what happened in this world (cf. *Scheme N* above), includes the assumption$_{AI}$ that the names occurring within these sentences function in the same way as the names used in everyday conversation. In other words, the reader is supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that the persons spoken about by the narrator were given their names in some kind of baptism, quite independently of the narrator's performance, were then continuously referred to by means of those names and the narrator has simply joined in this practice. Presented as a demand imposed by the narrative functions of the text on the reader, it amounts to this:

Principle (*R*). The occurrence of an expression which looks and behaves like a proper name in a text of narrative fiction indicates that the reader should assume$_{AI}$ that in this stage of narration the narrator utters a proper name to refer to that individual which has been assigned that name at the beginning of the chain to which this narrator's utterance belongs.[7]

This provides us with a simple principle of identification$_{AI}$ of, let us say, the person we are thinking about under the name "Emma" when reading Flaubert's text. It is the person uniquely satisfying *Description D* of the kind specified above in *Principle R*:

Description (*D*). The person to whom the name "Emma" has been assigned at the beginning of the chain to which these narrator's utterances belong.

The world to which this description is to be applied$_{AI}$ is fixed in advance as the actual world—by our locating$_{AI}$ the narrative performance and entities referred to by the narrator in this world. However, we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that *D* identifies the referent of the name "Emma" rigidly: in other words, with respect to all possible worlds it identifies Emma as that person who satisfies the *Description D* in the actual world. Within this framework, it should be clear that the *Description D* plays just the reference-fixing role, rather than the role of the

part of the readers. That is one of the basic assumptions of the "fictive utterance theory of fiction" (cf., e.g., Davies, 2012).

[7] Let us imagine someone asking: "You are just saying what we are required to *pretend* concerning an expression like 'Emma Bovary', namely that it is a proper name used by the narrator to refer to a real person. But what is it *in reality*?" The answer is quite straightforward: "You have just said that: it is an expression such that its functions within a text of narrative fiction require that it is interpreted$_{AI}$ as …" (cf. *Principle R*). This is a complete semantic characteristics specifying (not specifying$_{AI}$) the role played by this expression in its primary use.

meaning of the name "Emma". Hence, by appealing to *D* we do not re-establish the traditional descriptive theory of names in the field of narrative fiction.[8]

The *Description D* could be called "parasitic", "nominal" or "formal", because its identificatory force is parasitic upon the reference$_{AI}$ to the narrator's utterances and to the general mechanism of the functioning of names. Its informational content is extremely poor—but precisely owing to this deficit it enables us to identify$_{AI}$ the individual we think about as Emma (and distinguish her among all the Emmas in the universe) from the first occurrence of the name "Emma" in Flaubert's text. And to that very individual we then assign$_{AI}$ all the non-parasitic descriptions we collect when reading the text—while assuming$_{AI}$ that she is fully determinate also in all other obligatory respects not mentioned in the text.[9] In other words, we learn something new about Emma on almost every new page; yet we can think about her in quite a determinate way from the first encounter with her name in the text, due to the *Description D*.

2. Assumed$_{AI}$ Referents of Fictional Names Versus Fictional Characters

When Recanati specifies the relation between the fictional use of fictional names (primarily their use within the texts of narrative fiction) and their metafictional use (in our "serious" talk about fiction), he presents the former kind of use as basic and says, among other things: "[t]he practice of fiction, based on pretence, is what gives birth to the abstract artefacts which supervene on it and can in turn be referred to in metafictional sentences […]" (Recanati, 2021, p. 4). I cannot but agree—with the addition that, if my comments in Section 1 are right, the phrase "the practice of fiction based on pretence" should be unpacked as referring, on the author's side, not to her alleged "initial pretence"[10] but to her creating a text with literary functions requiring and prompting pretence on the part of its readers. On the readers' side, "the practice of fiction based on pretence" refers to their moves in the mode of pretence made in response to that requirement. Let me now say a few words about my understanding of the relation between these moves (in particular those consisting in assuming$_{AI}$ the real flesh and blood referents of fictional names) and literary characters, understood as elements of the construction of the literary work and hence as abstract artefacts.

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[8] The descriptivist account of fictional names has been defended, e.g., by García-Carpintero (2015; cf. Koťátko, 2016 for my reply).

[9] For the discussion of the last point, see Koťátko, 2010, Section 4. Moreover, it makes good sense for us as cooperative readers to imagine alternative scenarios in which the assumed$_{AI}$ referents of fictional names have acted differently than we are told in the book, and different things have happened to them (cf. Friend, 2011, p. 188 and the note 27 bellow).

[10] Evans (1982, p. 353) speaks about "the author's deliberate initial pretense" which consists in "pretending to have knowledge of things and episodes".

First of all, both should be strictly distinguished.[11] For the readers are certainly not supposed to assume, either straightforwardly or in the *as if* mode, that the name "Emma", as it appears in Flaubert's text, refers to an abstract entity which had a love affair with another, equally promiscuous abstract entity called "Rodolphe", deceiving thereby a pitiable abstract entity called "Charles". However, we should admit that when reading Flaubert's text, we can not only assume$_{AI}$ the existence of Emma as a *real human being* of flesh and blood, in order to make sense of the story—but at the same time (in the same act of reading) appreciate the *fictional character* called "Emma" as an ingenious literary construct. To be sure, there is a direct connection between these two moves. On the one hand, the literary functions of Flaubert's text require us to assume$_{AI}$ the existence of Emma as a real person (identified$_{AI}$ in a way specified in Section 1) and attribute$_{AI}$ to her the properties we find described in the text. On the other hand, precisely the fact that the literary functions of the text require us to make such moves, makes Emma Bovary one of the characters of Flaubert's novel, that is, one of the elements of its literary structure. Correlatively, Emma as a literary character can be identified precisely by listing the demands which this element of the structure of the novel imposes on us. As follows from our preceding discussion, the list includes assumptions the reader has to accept$_{AI}$ in order to let this element of the composition of the novel do its work for her, namely:

(1) the assumption that there exists precisely one person referred to by the narrator's utterances of the name "Emma" (namely the person to whom that name has been assigned at the beginning of the chain to which these utterances belong);

(2) the assumption that that person married a young doctor called "Charles Bovary", etc.

As for the non-parasitic properties of the kind mentioned in (2), they belong to the character called "Emma" in the way just specified; however, one might prefer some simpler and more elegant way of expressing this complex relation. Perhaps we can borrow Edward Zalta's well-known terminological distinction between two kinds of predication, *exemplify* versus *encode*, interpreting it for our purposes in the following way. First, as Flaubert's readers, we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that Emma, a person of flesh and blood, *exemplifies* the non-parasitic properties P_1, P_2, …, P_n, which we collect when reading the text. Second, this

[11] Here is an example supposed to illustrate the practical importance of this distinction. The question, "Is Dante's Ulisse (to be found in the 26th Canto of *Inferno*) identical with Homer's Odysseus?" has two different readings: (1) Do the literary functions of Dante's *Inferno* require that we take$_{AI}$ the occurrences of the name "Ulisse" as referring to the same person as the occurrences of the name "Ὀδυσσεύς" in *The Odyssey*? (2) Is Dante's Ulisse the same character as Homer's Odysseus? I suppose everybody will agree that the reply to the first question is "yes", while the reply to the second is "no" (for more on this, see Koťátko, 2017, pp. 329–330).

entitles us to say that Emma as a fictional character, i.e., as a unique literary construct, *encodes* the properties P_1, P_2, …, P_n. In other words, it was part of Flaubert's construction of the character called Emma that he "encoded in it" the properties P_1, P_2, …, P_n. And he did so by writing a text which would function only for the reader who assumes$_{AI}$ that there exists a real person called Emma who *exemplifies* the properties P_1, P_2, …, P_n. So, the reader's "decoding" this part of the construction of the novel consists in her accepting$_{AI}$ this assumption.

The essential relation between the flesh and blood individuals assumed$_{AI}$ as the referents of fictional names (in their use within fiction) and fictional characters as components of the structure of a work of narrative fiction might motivate us to approach both as one entity viewed from two different perspectives. Recanati (2018, Section VI) discusses a specific version of this approach, based on the concept of "dot-objects" involving various "facets" (e.g., Pustejovsky, 1995). Then the distinction we have been speaking about takes the form of a difference between two facets of the same composed object: the contrast itself does not thereby become less sharp or less theoretically important. As to the relation between both "facets", Recanati presents it so that "the flesh and blood individual […] is the internal facet of the cultural object" (2018, p. 18). Analogically, from the perspective of the theory of mental files, Recanati approaches the concept of a particular fictional character as a "metafictional file (about the abstract artefact) containing a pointer to the fictional file (about the flesh and blood individual portrayed in the fiction)" (2018, p. 22).

These are useful specifications of the relations holding within certain theoretical frameworks. However, neither these, nor the distinction between exemplifying and encoding, taken in themselves, can be regarded as an explanation of the functional tie between the roles played by abstract entities called fictional characters and by the assumed$_{AI}$ referents of fictional names, within the way in which works of narrative fiction perform their functions. My understanding of this tie is based on the assumption continuously applied throughout the discussion in this section: fictional characters taken as components of the literary structure of a work of narrative fiction (and hence as abstract artefacts) will not do their work for us unless we assume$_{AI}$ the existence of flesh and blood individuals referred to by fictional names and exemplifying such and such sets of properties. If you feel inclined to object that this is not the way in which readers are used to thinking about fictional characters, consider the following dialogue. (The question to be answered is whether *B*'s replies strike you as totally improbable or *A*'s questions as utterly manipulative).

A: Why it is right to say that Flaubert's novel includes the literary character called "Emma Bovary"?

B: Just read the book: it is part of what it says that there was a person with that name having such and such properties.

A: Does this mean that the book provides us with reliable information about such things and hence tells us something we should believe?

B: No, it tells us something we should pretend to believe if we want to make sense of (and to indulge in or even become immersed in) the story.

This fictitious dialogue, like the whole discussion in this section, assumes a certain functional relation which would collapse if we blurred the sharp distinction between its components. However, due to this essential relation it is certainly true that "we do not lose track of the flesh and blood individual when we refer to the artefact" (i.e., the fictional character as abstract artefact; Recanati, 2018, p. 23). Or that "we can hardly think of the fictional character Sherlock Holmes without thinking of the flesh and blood individual Sherlock Holmes" (p. 25) and conversely, that "talk about the flesh and blood individual is another way of talking about the artefact" (p. 24). Correspondingly, it is quite natural that if asked to characterize some fictional character, we say things like, "it is a detective who smokes a pipe, wears a cap, solves mysteries", etc. Should we interpret it so that we think about a fictional character "as about a pipe-smoking, cap-wearing, mystery-solving flesh and blood individual" (Recanati, 2018, p. 23)? That, I am afraid, would mean to impute a thread of incoherence into quite an innocent way of speaking which allows a perfectly consistent reading. To enable such a reading, we do not have to ascribe to ordinary speakers the exemplifying-encoding distinction. We can simply approach their utterances as cases of indirect predication, in which the property specified in the predicate-term is not ascribed to the referent of the subject-term, but to another entity related to it in some easily identifiable way.[12] In our case we characterize a certain artefact, namely a literary character, by listing some of the assumptions$_{AI}$ required of readers by this component of the literary structure of Doyle's stories. The enumeration of properties ascribable only to human beings can serve as the characteristics of a literary character only within this (typically implicitly assumed) framework.

3. Speaking About the Game of Make-Believe Versus Playing the Game

(A) Parafictional Use of (1) And (1_{FO})

Our interpretation of parafictional statements made by means of sentences like (1) or (1_{FO}) follows quite straightforwardly from the outcomes of our discussions in Sections 1 and 2. If we accept them, we have no choice but to insist that the parafictional use of the sentence:

[12] Similarly, when saying that some symphonies are noisy, we mean that their standard performances (rather than the compositions themselves, i.e., abstract artefacts) are noisy; when saying that some sentence is clever, we mean that the thought it expresses is a result of a clever way of thinking; when saying that some sauce is ingenious, we mean that it was an ingenious idea to combine such and such ingredients in such and such proportions, etc.

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries

serves to identify some of the assumptions which the reader has to $\text{accept}_{\text{AI}}$, in order to let Doyle's texts fulfil their literary functions for her. Then the content of the statement made can be identified as follows:

(1^{+}) The literary functions of Conan Doyle's texts require us to $\text{assume}_{\text{AI}}$ that the name "Sherlock Holmes", as it occurs in these texts, refers to a real person who is a detective and solves mysteries.

If you find this analysis too bombastic or "overstretched" or "theory-laden" in comparison with our intuitive approach to narrative fiction and its characters, consider (again) a short dialogue with a reader of Conan Doyle's stories:

A: Do you really assume that there was an ingenious detective called Sherlock Holmes?

B: No, I just pretend to assume that.

A: But why?

B: Because otherwise the book would not make sense to me. (Or: because I want to enjoy the story. Or: because this is what I am supposed to do as a reader).

A: So, when you say that Holmes was an ingenious detective you describe what you pretend to believe for the reasons you just mentioned?

If you feel that the likely reply to the last question is "yes" and are ready to admit that the whole dialogue properly reflects the readers' intuitive approach to narrative fiction (so that it cannot be dismissed as an artificial construct or as pure manipulation from my side), the same should be said of our interpretation of (1) in terms of the moves required by the literary functions of the text. The only difference is that theoretical analysis, unlike the fictitious dialogue above, is not supposed to mimic the way in which "ordinary" readers would speak about their moves and attitudes.

Another possible objection to (1^{+}) might point to the fact that the utterer of sentence (1) can forget Conan Doyle's name or simply need not know who wrote Sherlock Holmes stories. Then, of course, we should not ascribe to her the statement specified in (1^{+}), but some version of it reflecting her cognitive situation, e.g., something like, "the literary functions of the stories about Sherlock Holmes require us to $\text{assume}_{\text{AI}}$ that the name 'Sherlock Holmes', as it appears in the text …", etc. There are various ways of identifying the relevant text without mentioning the author—but the reference to the text itself and to occurrences of the name "Sherlock Holmes" in it seems to be (for our present purposes) unavoidable. The same objection can be raised against most of the following examples and I will not return to it, since the problem it points to is, as we see, easily resolved.

Thus, let us return to our specification of the statement made by the use of (1) within a conversation about literary characters. Since the name "Sherlock Holmes", as it occurs in the paraphrase (1^{+}), is mentioned rather than used, it cannot be said to refer to an assumed$_{AI}$ flesh and blood person, nor to a literary character, nor to anything else besides the name itself. Nevertheless, this should not obscure the fact that the assumptions$_{AI}$ specified in (1^{+}) are directly related to the fictional character called "Sherlock Holmes": they belong to the set of assumptions$_{AI}$ required by the literary functions of that construct. So, another possible paraphrase of the statement made by a parafictional use of (1), equivalent to (1^{+}), but this time including explicit reference to fictional character, would be:

(1^{++}) Sherlock Holmes, as Conan Doyle's literary character, encodes the properties of being a detective and solving mysteries.[13]

Thus far we have discussed a possible use of sentence (1) to make a claim about a portion of pretence licensed and prescribed by Conan Doyle's stories, in other words, about certain parameters of their fictional world. Hence, a fiction operator (such as "in Conan Doyle's stories", or "in the stories about Sherlock Holmes, do not ask me who wrote them") is implicitly present in the statement made by this kind of use of (1)—and its explicit occurrence in the sentence (1_{FO}) does not change the situation. Hence, the paraphrase (1^{+}) as well as (1^{++}) is to be taken as our proposal just as much for (1_{FO}) as for (1), in their parafictional use.

(B) Fictional Use of (1) And (1_{FO})

It will be useful to add a few words about fictional use of the same sentences, not only to get an illuminating contrast. First, we will soon have the opportunity to identify elements of both parafictional and fictional use of (1_{FO}) and (1), as interpreted in this section, in Recanati's analysis of parafictional statements.[14] Second, in Section 6 we will pay attention to a dynamic kind of discourse fluctuating between parafictional and fictional mode of speech.

Nobody would deny that sentence (1) finds an equally natural use within a discourse continuing in the pretence licensed or at least loosely inspired by Conan Doyle's stories. This is not to say that sentences uttered within such a discourse function in the same way as they would if uttered within the original text of narrative fiction. There the author inserts a special construct—narrator between himself and the reader. And he does so by creating a text which will work only for the reader who approaches$_{AI}$ its sentences as records of utterances

[13] The term *encodes* should be unpacked in the way specified in Section 2—in terms of the requirements which a literary character imposes on the reader.

[14] Needless to stress, this is just how things appear from the perspective of our account of parafictional and fictional statements, as presented in this section. Recanati himself approaches parafictional statements as a combination of metafictional and fictional elements. Cf. note 16 bellow.

in which a real person (the narrator) makes genuine assertions (rather than assertions$_{AI}$) about what happened in the real world (cf. *Scheme N* in Section 1 of the current paper). In contrast to this, in a conversation in the mode of fiction the speaker speaks for himself (if he does not play for the audience the role of some fictitious or real person, e.g., Holmes or Churchill)—and it is him to whom the audience is supposed to ascribe (not ascribe$_{AI}$) assertions$_{AI}$ (not assertions). Indeed, the audience can go one step further (as it happens in some examples in Sections 6 and 7) and accept the invitation to participate in the game of make-believe. Then she approaches$_{AI}$ the previous utterance as a serious assertion and demands the same approach$_{AI}$ to his own reply.

In any case, when using the sentence (1) within the parasitic fictional discourse inspired by Conan Doyle's stories, we pretend to be speaking about a real person of flesh and blood instead of speaking about a literary character, as it was in case (A). In other words, we continue in the game of make-believe initiated by Conan Doyle—and we can do more than that: we can creatively develop this pretence in a way which exceeds the original framework. Thus, I can, for example, say:

(1_{ext}) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries and I am off to meet him for a consultation.

It may seem that this kind of extension will be blocked, once sentence (1) is preceded by the words "in Conan Doyle's stories", as in the sentence (1_{FO}). However, that is not the case, since within a creative game of the kind exemplified by the sentence (1_{ext}), I can also say:

(1_{FOext}) In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries; but in fact he is a policeman and I am just going to meet him in Baker Street.

Or consider the following conversation:

A: Holmes is a brave policeman.

B: In Conan Doyle's stories, Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries. But I think you are right and Doyle is wrong.

Obviously, in such cases we cannot say the same about the relation between (1) and (1_{FO}) as we did in case (A). It is not so that (1_{FO}) just makes explicit the fiction operator implicitly present in the statement made by the use of (1), since now the phrase "in Conan Doyle's stories" does not function as a fiction operator: it is just used (within a new game of make-believe) to refer$_{AI}$ to Conan Doyle's texts as a source of factual information about real people, places, events, etc., whose reliability is to be assessed. Thus, instead of claiming that (1) and (1_{FO})

can be used to make the same statement (as was the case in (A) above), here we should just admit that (1_{FO}) can be used within the same kind of pretence as (1).

4. Bridging the Dichotomy

Now we are ready to appreciate Recanati's analysis of the parafictional use of sentence (1_{FO}), suggesting an option we have not yet considered. Its core consists in the assumption that part of what the speaker does when uttering (1_{FO}) is a continuation of the pretence initiated by Doyle's stories: the speaker pretends that by using the name "Sherlock Holmes" she refers to a real man and specifies one of his properties, like in our version (B) in Section 3. However, unlike in our case, the speaker does so not in order to keep the game of make-believe running and to enjoy her engagement in it: rather, the point is to demonstratively identify a certain component of the fictional world of Doyle's stories. As Recanati says: "the parafictional statement *embeds a piece of pretence* (corresponding to the fictional statement) *for demonstrative purposes* and says, truly or falsely, that this is what the world of the fiction is like" (Recanati, 2021, p. 18, emphasis in the original).[15]

As one might also put it, this analysis presents the statement made by use of (1_{FO}) as an efficient fusion of a straightforward assertion (like in our case (A) above), and a move in the mode of pretence (like in (B)), both combined in a way which allows (and calls for) truth evaluation.[16] So, the result can be viewed as one of the cases in which pretence is "used for serious purposes", to borrow words which Recanati (2018, pp. 6–7) quotes from Evans (1982, p. 364). We should just keep in mind that it is not a case of a homogeneous speech act made in the mode of pretence which, on the level of non-literal meaning, pragmatically implies a homogeneous serious statement about the relevant piece of fiction.[17] It is, on the level of literal meaning, a serious true or false statement

[15] Or: "[t]he general idea is that the parafictional speaker engages in pretence (e.g., pretends to refer to Sherlock Holmes and to predicate properties of 'him') but does so *in order to show what the fictional world of the story is like*" (Recanati, 2021, p. 18, emphasis in the original).

[16] This is so due to the fact that the move in the mode of pretence takes place within the framework set up by the metafictional introduction: "[t]he irreducible metafictional component involved in parafictional discourse is located in the reference to the fiction conveyed by the tag (when that tag is made explicit, as in our example); all the rest is a continuation of the pretence that is constitutive of fictional thought and talk" (Recanati, 2018, p. 26).

[17] This is how Recanati (2018) presents another case, the parafictional statement made by uttering a sentence which, like (1) and unlike (1_{FO}), does not contain an explicit fiction operator: "Sherlock Holmes is a clever British detective who plays violin and investigates cases for a variety of clients, including Scotland Yard". According to that interpretation (inspired by Walton), by uttering this sentence the speaker engages in pretence licensed by Doyle's stories. Hence, on the level of literal meaning, he does not express any proposition (since the name "Sherlock Holmes" fails to refer). However, due to the mechanism of prag-

including a switch to the mode of pretence, in which the content of what is literally and seriously asserted (about some piece of fiction) is specified via demonstration.

The question arises of whether the demonstrative presentation of the relevant portion of pretence initiated by Conan Doyle's stories really requires switching to the mode of pretence (so that the statement can be said "to embed a piece of pretence"). Perhaps the demonstration in question could rather be understood as an act of "putting a piece of pretence on display",[18] taken as something which one can do in an indifferent, uninvolved mode, without pretending anything and without presenting oneself as doing so. But let us stay with the authentic Recanati's proposal and with its thought-provoking element of combining (or switching between) two modes of speaking. Recanati leaves us in no doubt that he takes the switch to the mode of pretence to be unavoidable. Cf., for example:

> But the fictional approach insists that in order to do that (talk about the flesh and blood individual and thereby specify the properties which the fictional character encodes), the speaker has to engage in the pretence or simulate it by going along with the practitioners of the fiction and speaking as they do (that is, by pretend-referring to the flesh and blood individual and pretend-predicating properties of him). (Recanati, 2018, p. 18; cf. p. 24)[19]

Similarly, he insists that "the only way to access the internal content of a fiction is to actually imagine what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine" (Recanati, 2018, p. 24).

I believe, on the contrary, that one can "talk about the flesh and blood individual" and thereby specify part of "what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine"; in other words, identify a portion of the pretence required by the literary functions of a text of narrative fiction, without participating in that pretence, as well as without simulating such participation.[20] This is what happens in case (A) in Section 3 above. Initiating some pretence (by writing a text whose functions require and prompt moves in the mode of pretence on the part of its readers),[21] as well as specifying the content of that pretence in a subsequent talk about fiction, does not depend on our personal engagement in pretence: in both cases, it should be enough to use the right words in the right way and let them do their work. It would be strange to suppose that they would fail to provide their services to anyone who attempts to specify the pretence that she does not share

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matic implication (more on this in Recanati, 2018, pp. 8–9), his act conveys, on the level of non-literal meaning, a true message about the relevant fiction. Cf., for contrast, our presentation of case (A) in Section 3, where everything takes place on the level of literal meaning.

[18] I borrow the term "putting on display" from Sainsbury's (2012, Section II).

[19] That is not all. For the communication to succeed, the other party cannot stay out of the game: "[t]he audience too has to engage in the pretence" (Recanati, 2018, p. 24).

[20] And as part of it, without simulating the simulation of reference, in the case of fictional names, cf. (Recanati, 2018, p. 21).

[21] Cf. our polemics with "the myth of the author's initial pretence" in Section 1.

or is even unwilling or unable to share (typically due to some insurmountable mental blocks).

Let us imagine somebody saying "In this novel, Goethe was a secret police agent in Weimar at the time he wrote *Egmont*, but I certainly will not force myself into imagining such blatant nonsense". Or somebody saying "This novel invites us to pretend that there was a man called N., the most faithful follower of …,[22] who committed terrible crimes because of wealth and power: but I am unable to play this game, refuse even to try, and recommend the same to everyone". I do not suppose anyone would be inclined to cite such utterances as examples of communicative failure, arguing that the speaker is (for reasons she herself makes clear) unable to specify the content of the pretence she wants to speak about. Or to classify them as self-defeating acts, since in performing them the speaker is doing precisely the things she presents herself as unable to do.[23] Rather, in both cases we would probably say that although the speaker succeeded in identifying a portion of the pretence prescribed by the novel, she also made it clear that this piece of fiction would not work for her.

Finally, here are two more straightforward cases in which the shift to the mode of pretence is not blocked, but simply does not have opportunity to take place. Suppose that somebody opens a book, scans the first two lines and says: "Here I read that a man called 'K.' was arrested one morning. Wait, it's a novel … so I am supposed to imagine that. Well, perhaps next time". As far as I can see, nobody would argue that the speaker did not suceed to specify a portion of pretence prescribed by the novel to its readers or that what she said is in some way incoherent or paradoxical. Or: somebody tells me that in one famous novel a wife of a country doctor deceives her husband and wastes all family money. Hence, now I am able to identify a (small) portion of pretence prescribed by that novel to its readers, simply by repeating what I have heard, without ever finding myself in a position which would require that I share that pretence.

5. Preliminary Summary: A Tribute to Plurality

Despite some points of disagreement on the level of general assumptions and despite the fact that the interpretation proposed by Recanati and my alternative suggestion (cf. case (A)) seem to be in sharp opposition, they treat sentence (1_{FO}) as serving the same purpose, namely identifying one particular component of the pretence initiated by Conan Doyle's stories—the assumption$_{AI}$ that there is a real man called "Sherlock Holmes" who is a detective solving mysteries. Both of us understand this assumption$_{AI}$ as part of the pretence required of readers by the narrative functions of the text: no appeal to the author's alleged pretence (cf. our

[22] Fill in the name of whichever ideology or political movement first comes to mind.

[23] It should be clear that the question of whether and under what conditions one may be unable to pretend certain things is irrelevant here. The point of the argument is that were the above (Recanati, 2018, pp. 18, 24) claims right, the speech acts presented in our examples would come out as defective, contrary to our communicative intuitions.

polemics in Section 1) is involved. In this context, Recanati explicitly speaks about "what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine" (2018, p. 24; 2021, p. 20) or "what the story mandates its readers to imagine" (2021, p. 20). Furthermore, in both cases the result is a straightforward statement with full assertive force, and hence something truth-evaluable, as it should be. Finally, in both cases the "semantic innocence" is preserved in the relevant respect, emphasized in Recanati's introductory remarks preceding his analysis (cf. 2021, p. 14): no shift in the semantic value of the term "Sherlock Holmes" in the transition from (1) to (1_{FO}) is assumed.

So, in the end, the whole difference between the two interpretations of the parafictional statement made by uttering sentence (1_{FO}) is that in Recanati's version the content of the relevant pretence is *demonstrated* in an act in which the speaker herself switches to the mode of pretence, precisely for demonstration purposes, while in my version the content of the same pretence is simply *descriptively specified*. This can be summarized in two alternative schematic paraphrases of the statement made by the parafictional use of sentence (1_{FO}):

FR: Conan Doyle's stories prescribe to the readers, among other things, the following pretence (or: require what I will now show you; or simply: require this:[24]) (what follows is a performance in the mode of pretence, presented as a demonstration of a move required by Doyle's stories: this demonstration consists in uttering embedded sentence (1) in the mode of pretence—like in our case (B)).

PK: Conan Doyle's stories require the readers to $assume_{AI}$ that the name "Sherlock Holmes", as it appears in Doyle's texts, refers to a real person (that person who has been assigned that name at the beginning of the chain to which the relevant narrator's utterances belong) and that that person is a detective who solves mysteries (cf. our case (A) in Section 3 and our discussion in Section 2).

This was just a confrontation of Recanati's analysis of the statement made by uttering sentence (1_{FO}) and our presentation of case (A) as two ways of accomplishing the same task: to identify a certain element of the fictional world of Conan Doyle's stories. There is no real conflict or competition: as far as I can see, both ways (demonstrative and descriptive) make good sense and can be successfully applied by ordinary speakers, "successfully" meaning that the audience is given the intended information about Doyle's fiction. For this to happen, the audience need not care about which of these two ways was implemented in the speaker's utterance of (1_{FO}). And the speaker need not deliberately choose between them: she can simply utter a sentence suitable for sending the message

[24] This element corresponds to Davidson's treating "that" as a demonstrative used to refer to the utterance of the following sentence in his analysis of cases like "Galileo said that the earth moves" (cf. Davidson, 1984).

(about the relevant piece of fiction) she intends to deliver, hoping that it will do its work. If things go this way, what the speaker does is subjectively indifferent to the distinction between the two acts we took some care to distinguish above.[25] But the distinction remains sharp and potentially relevant even on a phenomenological level (i.e., noticeable on the level of experiences accompanying our communicative acts). For instance, the utterers of the sentences presented as examples at the end of Section 4 are far from being indifferent in this sense: Recanati's version is not available to them, for reasons they themselves make clear.[26]

Finally, we should not neglect the possibility of uttering (1) or even (1_{FO}) within the continuation (or creative development) of the game of make-believe initiated by Conan Doyle's stories, motivated by a "mere joy of the game" rather than by the intention to provide some information about Doyle's fiction (cf. our case (B) in Section 3). Even if, in this case, pretence is not applied for demonstrative purposes, it may still make sense to say that the pretence is demonstrated (or: performed in an ostentatious way), meaning thereby that it is presented as an overt invitation to a joint game of make-believe. And it may easily happen that an utterance in which (1) or (1_{FO}) is used to make a parafictional statement will *ex post* turn into a move in such a game, switching thereby from "serious" to fictional mode of speech. This motif will occupy us in the next section.

6. Serious/Fictional: A Transit Border

As we had to admit in the last section, the speaker uttering sentences like (1) or (1_{FO}) need not deliberately opt for one of the possibilities offered by these instruments: she can simply do what suggests itself as a natural move within the kind of discourse in which she is currently engaged. It is then the preceding and subsequent course of communication and its broader context that can (under favourable circumstances) enable us to properly classify the function of her act or the way in which this function has been performed. And since the utterance of

[25] However frustrating this might be, it is nothing exceptional. Here is an analogical case: I intend to say something about some person and use a sentence including a definite description as, under the circumstances, the only available means of identifying that person. Then my act so described (uttering a sentence I find suitable for delivering the intended message) is subjectively indifferent to the distinction between (i) expressing, on the level of literal meaning, the intended singular proposition and (ii) expressing the complex Russellian quantified proposition, while implicating (in the Gricean sense) a singular proposition as the message I intended to send. Cf. Stephen Neale's attempt to reconcile, on the level of Gricean implicatures, the orthodox Russellian theory of descriptions with our communicative intuitions (Neale, 1990, pp. 89–90) and my criticism in (Koťátko, 2009, pp. 556–557).

[26] For the same reasons, the corresponding interpretation is not available to the audience. And this will not change even if the speakers' inability or reluctance to imagine certain things will not be made explicit in the utterance but will be known to (or even shared by) the audience.

a sentence like (1) or (1_{FO}) fits into various language games, it can be smoothly integrated into various versions of the development of conversation, even if it takes some unpredictable turn (like a switch from the serious to the fictional mode or the other way round). So, the choice between the available alternatives can be made *ex post* or be revised, either in order to preserve the continuity of the conversation or to re-establish it on a new basis.

For instance, person *A* says "Flaubert's Emma is more impulsive than Tolstoy's Anna", intending to compare the construction of two literary characters, and hence applying two corresponding fiction operators, which relate the statement to two literary works. *A*'s audience, *B*, recognizes this due to the context, which is a "serious" discussion about Flaubert's and Tolstoy's literary achievements. Nevertheless, *B* wants to play a bit and so replies, "That might be true, but when I last met Emma and Anna, I got the opposite impression", switching thereby from "serious" to fictional discourse and shifting there also *A*'s original utterance. This move can be obvious to both sides and *A* can approach it as an invitation to join the game, rather than as a misunderstanding. Then *A*, accepting the game, can confirm (authorize, ratify) this shift, for instance by saying, "That only means that Emma feels uneasy in your presence".

Or: *A* can start a conversation by saying, "In Conan Doyle's stories, Lestrade is a bit of a hardened inspector, unable to follow Holmes' deductions". It should be clear from the context and *A*'s explicit use of a fiction operator within that context that she intends to speak about the way in which the author construes the relation between his characters, and hence to make a serious parafictional statement. *B* is aware of this but does not feel obliged to supress her playful mood. Hence, she replies, "Yes, but in reality, it was Lestrade who solved all those cases and Holmes reaped all the glory, owing to his devoted companion Watson".[27] And *B*, accepting the game and thereby also the re-evaluation of her original communicative contribution, replies, "That is precisely what I would have added, if you had not interrupted me".

Such conversations certainly deserve the label "mixed discourse". Those who are inclined to approach this kind of mixing, in the form of *ex post* shifting the mode of one and the same utterance from serious to fictional (or the other way round), as a disturbing move, blurring the boundaries which should remain sharp, should consider cases, in which the mixing takes the form of moves con-

[27] As follows from our discussion in Section 2, this is not a case of imagining (and presenting) an alternative ("counterfictional") version of Doyle's fictional character, but imagining that the assumed$_{AI}$ referent of the name "Lestrade", as used in Doyles's stories, has properties incompatible with those described in those stories. Hence I do not share Stacie Friend's way of presenting a similar case: "I might imagine what the Samsa family's life would have been like had Gregor never changed into a vermin. Even though I imagine contrary to what Kafka's story prescribes—I continue to imagine about the same character" (Friend, 2011, p. 188). Another thing is that I can consider the possibility that Kafka or Doyle construed their fictional characters in an alternative way and I can even imagine that this happened (e.g., as a reader of a story about Kafka or Doyle).

densed in a much tighter space: the form of co-predication or of anaphoric dependencies (see, e.g., Semeijn, Zalta, 2021 for recent discussion of both cases) or even the form of fusion, as presented in Recanati's analysis of parafictional statements (cf. Sections 4 and 5 above).

7. Some More Examples as a Possible Challenge for Analysis

As I have said, I appreciate Recanati's analysis as pointing to a possible use of sentences like (1_{FO}) omitted in our preceding discussion (focusing, in Section 3, on the contrast between cases (A) and (B)). However, let us consider what this kind of analysis would give us when applied to some other cases, slightly more complex or intricate than (1_{FO}). The point will not be to show that the performance (the move in the mode of pretence) ascribed by Recanati to the utterer of (1_{FO}) is somehow flawed, but that it might be more demanding in some other cases. Let us start with an interfictional statement, obtained from a combination of two parafictional statements: [28]

(4) In Austen's novel, Emma is a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while in Flaubert's novel, Emma is the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.

The utterer of this sentence gives, if we apply Recanati's analysis, a double demonstrative performance in the mode of pretence, switching, within one statement, from one game of make-believe to another and, thereby, from one fictional world to another. This may seem rather demanding but still not unfeasible; but let us consider another statement, again both parafictional and interfictional (it already appeared within one of the fictitious dialogues described in Section 6).

(5) Emma in Flaubert's novel is more impulsive than Anna in Tolstoy's novel.

If we again apply Recanati's interpretation, based on the idea of continuing pretence, the speaker deserves even more admiration than in the case of sentence (4). He must compare the degree of exemplification of one mental property during switching between two states of pretence, so to speak, on the road between two fictional worlds—the world of *Madame Bovary* and the world of *Anna Karenina*. I say "on the road" because this is not a case of comparing two fictional worlds from one external stand, but a case of alternately accepting (i.e., treating as real) two different fictional worlds, although "merely" in the *as if* mode.

[28] The point of the following remarks is not to open the problem of interfictionality as a special topic. Rather, they continue in confronting two accounts of parafictional statements discussed in Sections 4 and 5, this time focusing on cases when parafictional statements take on an intertextual dimension. The question is what the moves assumed by these two accounts would look like in such cases (for recent discussion of interfictional statements, see Stokke, 2021, Section 5.1).

And because of the application of two fiction operators, this fluctuation cannot be eliminated by postulating a new fictional world which includes both Emma and Anna, exposed there to our comparison: hence, like in case (4), travelling between two worlds is unavoidable.

The situation radically changes if we interpret the statements made by uttering (4) and (5) in the same way as case (A) in Section 3, i.e., if we read (4) and (5) simply as comparing two fictional characters, and hence abstract artefacts situated in one, namely actual world, among other cultural products. What we compare in such cases are elements of the literary composition of two novels requiring from their readers acceptance$_{AI}$ of two different sets of assumptions. Our task presupposes identification, rather than alternating acceptance$_{AI}$ of these assumptions; in other words, no switching between two states of pretence and two corresponding fictional worlds is necessary. On the contrary, we compare, from a stable standpoint, moves in the mode of pretence, prescribed by two different texts of narrative fiction—and we do so without pretending anything, without demonstrating or simulating any kind of pretence for our audiences and without inviting them to participate in any kind of pretence. Then the content of the statement made by uttering (4) can be specified as follows:

(4^{+}) Austen's novel requires the reader to assume$_{AI}$ that the name "Emma", as used in Austen's text, refers to a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while Flaubert's novel requires the reader to assume$_{AI}$ that the name "Emma", as used in Flaubert's text, refers to the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.[29]

And since a literary character, taken as an element of a composition of a literary work, can be identified by specifying the set of requirements it imposes on the reader (cf. the discussion in Section 2), we can put the same in the following way:

(4^{++}) Austen's novel includes, under the name "Emma", a character encoding the property of being a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while Flaubert's novel includes, under the name "Emma", a character encoding the property of being the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.

Similarly, for (5):

[29] Cf. our attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of such analyses with our intuitive approach to works of narrative fiction and their characters in the short fictitious dialogue in Section 3.

(5^{+}) The person we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ as the real bearer of the name "Emma Bovary", as it appears in Flaubert's novel, is endowed with a greater degree of impulsiveness than the person we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ as the real bearer of the name "Anna Karenina", as it appears in Tolstoy's novel.[30]

Finally, let us consider the sentence

(5_{ext_2}) Our boss is less impulsive than Emma Bovary but more impulsive than Anna Karenina.

As far as I can see, uttering this sentence can function in (at least) three ways:

(a) as a serious statement comparing the (assumed) degree of impulsiveness of a real person (the speaker's boss) and the degrees of impulsiveness encoded by two literary characters (i.e., belonging to what we are supposed to ascribe$_{AI}$ to assumed$_{AI}$ referents of the names "Emma Bovary" and "Anna Karenina", as they occur in the relevant texts);

(b) as a creative development of the pretence initiated by Flaubert's and Tolstoy's novels, via pretending that the real world includes, as its inhabitants, besides our boss also Emma and Anna (endowed with properties encoded by relevant literary characters), all of them being exposed to our psychological assessment;[31]

(c) as a conditional statement about what we would discover if Emma and Anna were real inhabitants of our world (endowed with properties encoded by the relevant literary characters) and if we had the opportunity to compare their temperament with that of our boss.

The point of making statement (a) could be to say something about the boss, by comparing his temperament with that encoded by two well-known fictional

[30] Version (5^{++}) would simply mimic (4^{++}).

[31] Let us compare this with Mark Crimmins' account of the statement made by uttering the sentence "Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson". By pretending to be speaking about three real people (our case b), we make, according to Crimmins, a genuine statement about one real person (Ann)—a statement with a content corresponding to our case (a), specified by Crimmins in a way which he himself classifies as "laborious" (1998). Honestly speaking, I find this "facilitating" maneuver (another example of "using pretence for serious purposes") more complicated than a straightforward comparison of one real person with two fictional characters (not to speak about the problem of truth-evaluation, cf. Crimmins, 1998, pp. 4–5). My proposal is to approach (a) and (b) as two self-contained acts, such that (a) need not be mediated by (b) and making (b) need not serve as an auxiliary step for making (a). Cf. also Recanati's interpretation of Crimmins' example as involving exploitation of the mechanism of pragmatic implications, bringing us from (b) to (a) (Recanati, 2018, pp. 8–9). Like in the case discussed in the footnote 17 above, I take it that everything is settled on the level of literal utterance meaning.

characters. Or it could be the other way around: the (assumedly well-known) temperament of the boss is taken as a yardstick for characterizing the temperament (degree of impulsiveness) encoded by two literary characters. In any case, no pretence (and hence no continuation in the game of make-believe initiated by the relevant novels) is involved.[32] We compare three (in principle easily accessible) components of our world: one person of flesh and blood with two abstract artefacts. Statement (c) can serve, in its own way, the same purposes as (a), while (b) would most naturally function as part of a creative game of make-believe, played just for entertainment. The moves made in (b) and (c) should not be confused: to assume, in the mode of pretence, that a certain counterfactual state of the world is real, is clearly not the same as to consider, in the hypothetical mode, what would have happened (here: what we would find out about some individuals) if a certain counterfactual state of the world were real.

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[32] Needless to add, the utterance of (5_{ext_2}), in all suggested readings, can be meant and understood as implicating (in the Gricean sense) an ironic message: that the boss is absolutely incapable of anything like impulsive behaviour, so that, as far as impulsiveness is concerned, there is nothing to be comparatively assessed.

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