

AperTO - Archivio Istituzionale Open Access dell'Università di Torino

Against Against Fictional Realism

This is the author's manuscript

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/74286> since

Terms of use:

Open Access

Anyone can freely access the full text of works made available as "Open Access". Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license. Use of all other works requires consent of the right holder (author or publisher) if not exempted from copyright protection by the applicable law.

(Article begins on next page)



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

This is an author version of the contribution published on:

Questa è la versione dell'autore dell'opera:

*"Against Against Fictional Realism", Grazer Philosophische Studien 80 (2010),
47-63*

The definitive version is available at:

La versione definitiva è disponibile alla URL:

[<http://rodopi.web5.orangehill.nl/senj.asp?BookId=GPS+80>]

Against Against Fictional Realism

Alberto Voltolini

Department of Philosophy

University of Turin

via S.Ottavio 20, I-10124 Turin (Italy)

tel. +39/011/6703741

fax +39/011/8124543

email: alberto.voltolini@unito.it

homepage: <http://www.cei.unimo.it/personale/voltolini/>

Against Against Fictional Realism

Abstract

In a recent (2005) paper, Anthony Everett has mounted a very serious attack against realism with respect to fictional entities. According to Everett, *ficta* raise deep logico-ontological worries, for they violate some basic logical laws and are problematically indeterminate with respect to both their existence and identity. Since an antirealist account for sentences apparently committing us to *ficta* is available, no such commitment is really needed. In this paper I will try to show, first, that the antirealist account Everett proposes for those sentences is not convincing. Moreover, by relying on the Meinongians' distinctions between i) predicative and propositional negation and ii) either modes of predication or kinds of property, I will argue that the logico-ontological problems Everett arises against *ficta* can be solved. Finally, I will try to show that both the 'modes of predication'- and the 'kinds of property'- distinctions (especially the first one) are not so problematic as Everett holds.

In a recently published paper,¹ Anthony Everett has provided some important arguments against any realist conception of fictional entities, what he collects under the general label "fictional realism".

Everett's line of attack is very interesting, new, and profound. For instead of attacking fictional realism on the semantic side as usual, by claiming that sentences apparently committed to *ficta* can be paraphrased in such a way that no more commitment arises, he straightforwardly yields some ontological arguments against fictional entities. These arguments are intended to show that *ficta* violate some basic logical laws as well as are problematically indeterminate with respect to both their existence and identity given very intuitive principles about these ontological features. In this respect, Everett explicitly follows and extends Russell's original criticisms against Meinong to the effect that Meinongian entities violate the law of noncontradiction.² Only at this point, Everett engages himself in

providing a fictionalist antirealist truthconditional account of the sentences apparently committed to *ficta*.

In what follows, however, I will try to show, first, that Everett's fictionalist antirealist truthconditional account is not convincing. Secondly and more importantly, I will argue that fictional entities do not actually raise the troubles Everett envisages. I will do that by resorting to the following Meinongian distinctions: (i) the distinction between predicative and propositional negation; (ii) the distinction between either modes of predication or kinds of properties. Curiously enough, Everett notices that the second kind of distinctions has helped Meinongians in eschewing Russell's ontological criticism to Meinong,³ but he does not consider the possibility of applying that kind of distinctions to his own cases. He simply states that 'the objections I have raised to fictional realism cannot straightforwardly be blocked by invoking these sorts of distinctions' (2005:649). Probably this depends on the fact that he independently thinks that the distinctions of the second kind are flawed. Finally, I will therefore conclude this paper by showing that the reasons why Everett thinks so are untenable.

1. Following a widespread tradition, Everett assumes that what he calls *Fictional Object Sentences (FOSs)* such as:

(1) [1a]⁴ Raskolnikov is a fictional character

namely, the sentences that appear to be involved with fictional characters yet outside the perspective of any fictional story apparently about them, are the most problematic for an antirealist account. For, unlike sentences such as:

(2) [(4)(a)] Raskolnikov is a student

that seem to concern a fictional character yet from inside the perspective of a certain fictional story, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in this case, FOSs can hardly be treated as fictionalist antirealists would like them to be; namely, as sentences affected by a pretending use that makes them committal from the pretense perspective that there is someone doing the things narrated in the fiction (in this case, that there is an individual named "Raskolnikov" doing a certain crime, etc.), even though they are absolutely (i.e., outside the scope of the pretense) noncommittal. Yet according to Everett, the impression that there is a substantial difference between FOSs and sentences such as (2) to be accounted for in realist terms – the former as really committal, the latter as merely apparently committal – is erroneous. For even FOSs are imbued with an, admittedly more complex, pretending use. Hence, they only make *as-if* they were about something, notably a fictional character. Everett labels the pretense that surrounds FOSs a *P₂-pretense*, meaning that it is a kind of second-order pretense encompassing the ordinary first-order, or *P₁*, pretenses, surrounding sentences like (2). In a *P₂*-pretense, one makes-believe that the overall realm of what there is is such that it not only contains ordinary entities like you and me, but it also contains entities that are fictional characters, those that such that in *P₁*-pretenses one makes-believe that they are ordinary individuals doing the things narrated in the relevant fiction.⁵ As a result, it turns out that not only sentences like (2), but also FOSs, are merely fictionally, not really, true. Hence, they have only fictional, but not real, truthconditions. Their singular terms – "Raskolnikov", in our example – indeed have just a pretended reference contributing to those fictional truthconditions, but in point of fact have no reference at all. How could it be otherwise, Everett goes on saying, given that there are mixed sentences resulting from joining a FOS with a sentence of the same kind of (2) that admittedly is only fictionally true, as for instance:

(3) [6b] Conan Doyle's most famous character, Sherlock Holmes, saves the life of Queen Victoria.

That is, if Holmes' saving the life of Queen Victoria is just a fictional truth, how can a sentence that combines saying this with saying that Holmes is the most famous of Doyle's creations be more than being fictionally true as well? Finally, according to Everett the erroneous impression that FOSs have real truthconditions and a real truthvalue comes not only from the fact that, like many ordinary merely fictionally true sentences (those such as (2) which are uttered in P_1 -pretenses), they convey an information about the real world – as far as (1) is concerned, presumably the information that an author has told a story one of whose original protagonists is named “Raskolnikov” – but also from the fact that, unlike those sentences, our primary purpose in using them is just to convey such an information. FOSs are therefore particularly characterized by the bridging principle that affects many ordinary merely fictionally true sentences, namely that they are fictionally true iff something else is really true, that is, iff the information about the real world they convey is really the case.⁶

Let me first say that the idea that FOSs are just fictionally true is scarcely convincing. A sentence such as (1) appears to be a categorical sentence of the same kind as:

(4) Two is a number

(5) Honesty is a virtue

namely, a sentence which assigns a specific ontological category to a certain entity. Either one has a fictionalist strategy that applies to *all* such sentences, admittedly one which is hard to find (unless we want to run fictionalism also as far as sentences like:

(6) George W. Bush is a concrete individual

are concerned), or to adopt it only when fictional entities are concerned sounds too *ad hoc*.

Moreover, by running fictionalism with respect to FOSs we seem to lose discriminative power. For in point of fact we want to tell a sentence like (1) from a sentence like:

(7) The Father is a fictional character

which we may well consider to be merely fictionally true when we take it as uttered from the perspective of a ‘metafictional’ story such as Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Or even better than that, we want to distinguish between two uses of (7), one in which the sentence is fictionally true for this is the way things go in Pirandello’s story (its main protagonists are not concrete individuals, but fictional characters) and another one in which the sentence is really, not fictionally, true for it says that the Father is an entity of the very same general kind as Raskolnikov, Holmes and all other fictional fellows.

Finally and most importantly, Everett’s appeal to the bridging principle that a sentence is fictionally true iff something else is really true seems to be incorrect. It may be the case that in order for a sentence to be fictionally true, a certain state of affairs must really obtain – this necessary condition of the fictional truth of this sentence is a real *truthmaker* of the sentence. For instance, to slightly modify Everett’s own example,⁷ if Mummy wants Little Johnny to come home for dinner and thereby stop his ‘children-as-bears’- make-believe game, it may well be the case that in order for her utterance of:

(8) The bear is expected for dinner in his hole

to be fictionally true,

(9) Little Johnny is expected home for dinner

must be true, that is, really true as well.⁸ But it sounds absurd to say that it is enough for a sentence to be fictionally true that a certain state of affairs really obtains – making real facts sufficient conditions of fictional truths would make fiction something we get for free; (9)'s real truth cannot be enough for (8) to be fictionally true – nothing happening in reality *eo ipso* generates fictional truths!⁹ As a result, it may well be the case that a mixed sentence like (3) must have a definite kind of truthvalue, as Everett points out. Yet perhaps the story must run the other way around: it is because its FOS-component is *really* true that also its other component, hence the mixed sentence as well, must be really, not merely fictionally, true.¹⁰

2. Clearly enough, in order for not only FOSs, but also non-FOS sentences like (2) purportedly about fictional characters to be not only really true, but also really true insofar as they are *really* about such characters, our overall inventory of what there is must also contain fictional characters. Now, Everett is right in saying that in order for this to be really the case, his ontological qualms against *ficta* have to be overcome. Yet insofar as his qualms are extensions of Russell's ontological critiques on Meinong, one may suspect that the machinery Meinongians normally use to cope with these critiques can be applied to Everett's objections as well. As I hinted at before, this machinery has to do with i) the distinction between predicative and propositional negation (non-*F* vs. it is not the case that *p*) ii) the distinction between different modes of predication of one and the same property, the internal and the

external mode of predication,¹¹ or between different kinds of properties, the extranuclear properties and their (watered-down) nuclear counterparts.¹²

Let me first recall how Meinongians i)+ii) apply to Russell's criticism that Meinongian objects violate the law of noncontradiction for it turns out that the square which is not a square¹³ is and is not a square at the same time, and that the existing King of France both exists and does not exist at the same time. According to Meinongians, as I just said, predicative negation is not the same as propositional negation; moreover, either one and the same property F can be predicated of a Meinongian object in two different ways (internal vs. external), or a Meinongian object can possess both an extranuclear property F and its 'watered-down' nuclear counterpart (let me call this counterpart $*F*$).¹⁴ As a result, the square which is not a square does not violate the law of noncontradiction. Granted, it is internally a square and also internally a nonsquare (or alternatively, is $*a\ square*$ as well as $*a\ nonsquare*$; namely, that entity has both a certain 'watered down' nuclear property and its 'watered down' nuclear complement). But it is not the case that: both that Meinongian entity is internally a square and it is not the case that that entity is internally a square (or alternatively, it is not the case that: both that Meinongian entity is $*a\ square*$ and it is not the case that that entity is $*a\ square*$. Nor does the existing King of France violate the law. For while the existing King of France internally exists (or $*exists*$, i.e., has the 'watered down' nuclear counterpart of existence *tout court*), it fails to exist externally (or to exist *tout court*).¹⁵

Now, in a Russellian vein Everett objects to fictional realists that fictional entities violate the law of noncontradiction and the symmetry of identity. Suppose that we have an inconsistent fiction whose protagonist a is said to be both the same and not the same as another protagonist b , as well as another inconsistent fiction whose protagonist a is said to be identical with another protagonist b , yet b is said not be identical with a . If we suitably reify those protagonists, says Everett, in the first case we have that one and the same *fictum* a is

identical as well as not identical with another fictional character *b*, hence we have a violation of the law of noncontradiction, while in the second case we have that the fictional character *a* is identical with another fictional character *b*, yet *b* is not identical with *a*, hence we have a violation of the symmetry of identity.¹⁶ Yet by means of the above Meinongian machinery i)+ii), Everett's objections are easily circumvented: one just has to adapt the first aforementioned Meinongian reply to Russell. Let us see.

As to Everett's first objection, one may well have both that *a* is internally identical with *b* and that *a* is internally nonidentical with *b* (or alternatively, that *a* is *identical with* *b* and *a* is *nonidentical with* *b*), yet it is not the case that: both *a* is internally identical with *b* and it is not the case that *a* is internally identical with *b* (or alternatively, it is not the case that: both *a* is *identical with* *b* and it is not the case that *a* is *identical with* *b*). True enough, therefore, *ficta* are impossible entities insofar as they are both internally identical with (*identical with*) and internally nonidentical with (*nonidentical with*) other *ficta*; in other terms, they are *objectually* contradictory entities insofar they have internally both a property and its complement (or they have both a *property* and its *complement*). Yet *ficta* do not violate the *propositional* law of noncontradiction, which precisely appeals to propositional rather than to predicative negation.

As to Everett's second objection, one may well have that, if *a* is internally identical with *b*, then *b* is internally identical with *a*, and yet at the same time be internally nonidentical with *a* (or *mutatis mutandis*, that, if *a* is *identical with* *b*, then *b* is *identical with* *a*, and yet at the same time be *nonidentical with* *a*). Yet again, it is not the case that: both *a* is internally identical with *b* and it is not the case that *b* is internally identical with *a* (or *mutatis mutandis*, it is not the case that: both *a* is *identical with* *b* and it is not the case that *b* is *identical with* *a*), which is what the violation of the symmetry of identity would require.¹⁷

At this point, we may proceed further. The above Meinongian machinery allows a fictional realist to deal also with the two other problems that Everett arises against fictional entities, the problems of the ontic indeterminacy of whether a fictional character *a* is the same as another fictional character *b* and of whether there is such a thing as a certain fictional character *f*.

As to the first problem, by noticing that a lot of fictional stories remain indeterminate as to whether one of their protagonists *a* is the same as another of their protagonists *b*, Everett remarks that one can rely on Evans' wellknown argument¹⁸ that it cannot be indeterminate whether *o* is identical with *o'* in order to derive the contradiction that *a* is definitely distinct from *b* and *a* is not definitely distinct from *b*. So again, *ficta* violate the *propositional* law of noncontradiction.¹⁹

Granted, here no appeal to the distinction between predicative and propositional negation may be helpful. Yet the distinction between either modes of predication or kinds of property can. For one has to note that it is one thing whether it is indeterminate whether *a* is internally identical with *b* (or *identical with* *b*), quite another whether it is indeterminate whether *a* is externally identical with *b* (or *tout court* identical with *b*). By means of the first thing, we are actually appealing to *ontic indeterminacy in a story*: a fictional story says, or implies, that as regards its protagonists *a* and *b*, there is no fact of the matter whether *a* is identical with *b* or not.²⁰ By means of the second thing, however, we are appealing to a quite different matter, i.e., *ontic indeterminacy out of a story*: of a certain fictional entity *a*, there is no fact of the matter it is identical with another such entity *b* or not. Now, from the first kind of indeterminacy one cannot pass to the second kind of indeterminacy. Let me suppose that Evans is right in his argument against vague objects. If this is the case, that it is indeterminate whether *a* is internally identical with (or *identical with*) *b* amounts to *a*'s being such, that it is indeterminately internally identical with (or indeterminately *identical with*) *b*.

Nevertheless, from the fact that a is indeterminately internally identical with (or indeterminately *identical with*) b , plus the fact that b is not indeterminately internally identical with (or not indeterminately *identical with*) b and Leibniz's Law, one can precisely derive that it is not the case that a is externally identical with (or *tout court* identical with) b , hence that it is not the case that: it is indeterminate whether a is externally identical with (or *tout court* identical with) b . Thus, from the fact that it is indeterminate whether a is internally identical with (or *identical with*) b , no problem tied to the identity indeterminacy of fictional characters arises. For as far as the external predication of identity / the extranuclear property of identity is concerned, there is no such problem. Incidentally, this fits our intuitions: from the fact that within a story it is indeterminate whether, say, Rosenkrantz is the same as Guildenstern – an idealized version of *Hamlet*'s tale at least entails that – it does not follow that it is indeterminate whether, out of the story, the *fictum* Rosenkrantz is the same as the *fictum* Guildenstern: the two come apart.

As to the second problem, according to Everett there are stories in which it is indeterminate whether there is such a thing as a certain fictional character f . As none of the three possibilities by means of which this indeterminacy can be interpreted really works, namely: a) the *fictum* is an ontologically indeterminate entity; b) it is indeterminate whether the property of being the fictional character f is instantiated; c) it is indeterminate whether the state of affairs of there being a fictional character f obtains, he goes on saying, it is not clear how can such existence indeterminacy subsist.²¹

Yet again, it is one thing whether it is indeterminate whether there is a thing that is internally identical with (*identical with*) f , quite another whether it is indeterminate whether there is a thing that is externally identical with (*tout court* identical with) f . In the first case, we have *existential indeterminacy within a story*: the story says or implies that there is no fact of the matter as to whether there is one of its protagonists. In the second case, we have

existential indeterminacy out of a story: there is no fact of the matter as to whether there is a certain fictional entity.²² Now, the first indeterminacy does not entail the second. Rather, from the fact that it is indeterminate whether *f* is such that there is a thing that is internally identical with (*identical with*) it, namely – assuming again that Evans is right – from the fact that *f* is indeterminately such that there is a thing that is internally identical with (*identical with*) it, one can derive that it is not the case that: it is indeterminate whether there is a thing that is externally identical with (*tout court* identical with) *f*. For if *f* is indeterminately such that there is a thing that is internally identical with (*identical with*) it, then it is determinate whether there is a thing that is externally identical with (*tout court* identical with) *f*: *f* is the fictional entity which is indeterminately internally identical with (indeterminately *identical with*) itself. Hence, it is not the case that: it is not the case that: it is determinate whether there is a thing that is externally identical with (*tout court* identical with) *f*, or, which is the same, it is not the case that: it is indeterminate whether there is a thing that is externally identical with (*tout court* identical with) *f*. Incidentally, this fits our intuitions: from the fact that within a story it is indeterminate whether there is such a thing as the protagonist's mum (let's imagine that the story says or implies that there is no fact of the matter as to whether the protagonist is a human or a robot), it does not follow that it is indeterminate whether there is such a thing as the character of – to give it a name – Yes/no-Mummy. For it is true that, for instance, that character indeterminately has internally the property of *being the protagonist's mum*, or indeterminately has the property of **being the protagonist's mum**.

To be sure, Everett adds that his criticisms regarding the ontic indeterminacy of a character's existence and identity hold only if one respectively grants two principles that he takes for 'nearly platitudinous':

(P1) If the world of a story concerns a creature a , and if a is not a real thing, then a is a fictional character.

(P2) If a story concerns a and b , and if a and b are not real things, then a and b are identical in the world of the story iff the fictional character of a is identical to the fictional character of b .

(2005:627)

By resorting to either principle, Everett holds, one can indeed derive existence indeterminacy and ontic indeterminacy for fictional characters respectively.²³

One way of formulating my discomfort with Everett's view here is that of saying that these two principles cannot play the role Everett wants them to have, for they are not so platitudinous as he holds. To begin with, there is no pre-theoretical understanding of either principle, for the phrase "the world of the (a) story" those principles mobilize is actually ambiguous. In actual fact, the sense of this phrase which is appealed to by a pretense theorist like Everett is definitely *not* the same as the sense of this phrase a realist on fictional characters should appeal to. For the world of the story of a pretense theorist is just a point of evaluation (as well as a parameter of an index of interpretation) for sentences like (2) taken to be fictionally true, that is, true in the world of the pretense. This means that for a pretense theorist, that world does not contain fictional characters, but rather, concrete individuals that occur in that world as referents of the singular terms involved *qua* used in the context having that world as its 'world'-parameter ("Raskolnikov", for instance), yet that simply do not figure in the actual world, in whose context those terms are referentless. This indeed accounts for the pretense-theoretic claim that those sentences are only *as-if* they were true and the singular terms they contain are only *as-if* they had referents. Once one so pretense-theoretically reads the phrase "the world of the (a) story", it is not so clear that both (P1) and

(P2) hold. People may agree on their antecedents while parting company with their consequents.²⁴

Anyway, let us assume that the phrase “the world of the story” is taken in the sense a fictional realist would mobilize, so that it refers not to the above evaluation point, which contains concrete individuals that do not belong to the domain of the actual world, but to an environment containing fictional characters, that do belong to the domain of the actual world. Yet even granted that assumption, the distinction between ontic indeterminacy in a story and ontic indeterminacy out of a story that can be nicely treated by appealing either to the ‘mode of predication’ or to the ‘kinds of property’- distinction bring its about that the above principles (P1)-(P2) may either at most vacuously hold or be untrue, for the reasons I have given above. First, even if in the environment of the story it is an indeterminate matter whether there is a thing which is internally identical with (*identical with*) the fictional character *a*, it is not an indeterminate matter whether there is *simpliciter* a thing which is externally identical (or identical *tout court*) with that character. As this situation leaves the appropriate instance of (P1)’s antecedent either without a determinate truthvalue or with the truthvalue Undecided (if we adopt a three-valued logic),²⁵ it makes that instance at most vacuously true. Second, even if in the environment of the story it is an indeterminate matter whether the fictional characters *a* and *b* are internally identical (*identical*), it is not an indeterminate matter whether they are externally identical (or identical *tout court*); this it is simply false. As this situation leaves the appropriate instance of (P2)’s biconditional consequent without a determinate truthvalue (or assigns it Undecided), for unlike its righthand side, its lefthand side has no determinate truthvalue (or has Undecided as well), if that instance’s antecedent is true then that instance has no determinate truthvalue (or has Undecided) as well.

3. At this point, one may wonder why Everett did not consider the appeal to either the ‘mode of predication’- or the ‘kinds of property’- distinction as a way of addressing the ontological problems he raised, especially since, as I said at the beginning, he takes his problems to be an extension of the problems that Russell addressed to Meinong and that Meinongians claim to have solved precisely by *inter alia* appealing to either distinction. The only reason I can envisage for this omission is that Everett takes either distinction to be independently problematic. Yet I think that this is not the case, as I will now try to show.

First of all, Everett says that one draws either distinction where intuitively there is no such distinction.²⁶ Yet this appeal to intuitions is quite subjective. For one might say that things stand precisely the other way round. When we say for instance that the existing King of France both exists and does not exist, or that – to come to an example having directly to do with fiction – unlike the ghost of Hamlet’s father, Raskolnikov exists (for in the relevant fiction he, unlike the former, is a living being) but also that, precisely like Hamlet, Raskolnikov does not exist (for he as well as Hamlet are fictional characters), we do not intend to contradict ourselves. For – we would straightforwardly say – we are appealing to different modes of existing or senses of “existence”. And the ‘mode of predication’- or the ‘kind of properties’ distinction are precisely attempts at accounting for these different modes or senses.

Moreover, Everett says that either distinction postulates an ambiguity in FOSs where there seems to be no ambiguity.²⁷ Again, this is not the case. Take again our sentence:

(7) The Father is a fictional character.

There immediately is a sense in which this sentence is true in the story (for Pirandello’s ‘metafictional’ story characterizes the Father precisely as being a fictional character rather

than as a concrete individual). Also immediately, there is another sense in which that sentence is true out of the story: according to this sense, at least *prima facie*, that sentence speaks the truth of the Father as well as any other similar sentence, e.g. (1), speaks the truth of the fictional character there involved, e.g. Raskolnikov. Again, the ‘mode of predication’- vs. the ‘kinds of property’- distinction are ways to account for this intuitive difference between those two senses.

Furthermore, and most importantly, Everett says that neither distinction is able to account for the truth of a mixed sentence such as:

(10) [(7)] Both Oedipus and Freud were devoted to their mothers. But while Freud was a real person, Oedipus is only a fictional character.

For ‘in order for (10) [(7)] to be true, it must be possible for fictional characters and real people to bear the same properties in the same way’, which is what either distinction is unable to account for (2005:644-5). But this is not the case either. Suppose one appeals to an independently motivated idea such as that of the unarticulated constituents that the propositions sentential tokens express contain, as when one utters:

(11) It rains

meaning, say, that it is raining *in Paris*.²⁸ Then one can easily interpret (10) as meaning something richer than what it verbally expresses, namely a proposition containing precisely a certain unarticulated constituent.²⁹ Now, the free enrichment that this recourse to unarticulated constituents mobilizes can be interpreted precisely by appeal either to the ‘mode of predication’- or (perhaps a bit more artificially) to the ‘kinds of property’- distinction. For

either a relevant token of the first conjunct of (10) conveys that both Oedipus and Freud were devoted *in their own mode* to their mothers, where the phrase “in their own mode” precisely refers to the propositional constituent that that token leaves unarticulated, namely an existential quantification over different modes of predication of one and the same property, the property of *being mother-devoted* (that Oedipus possesses internally while Freud possesses it externally). In this respect, the sentential token in question works in the same way as the following token of:

(12) Both you and I opened the door

which means that both you and I opened the door *in our own way* (in point of fact, I opened the door by gently accompanying it, you opened the door by rudely kicking it). Or a token of the first conjunct of (10) conveys that both Oedipus and Freud were devoted *in their own sense* to their mothers, where the phrase “in their own sense” precisely refers to the propositional constituent that that token leaves unarticulated, namely an existential quantification over different yet close meanings linked by some kind of polysemic relation. For different yet close meanings are indeed mobilized by the predicative term of that conjunct, namely the extranuclear property of *being mother-devoted*, that Freud possesses, and the corresponding watered-down nuclear property, that Oedipus possesses. In this respect, the sentential token in question works precisely in the same way as the following token of:

(13) Both Chomsky and I are speaking

which means that both Chomsky and I are speaking *in our own sense*, where the senses alluded to are close polysemically connected meanings (Chomsky is speaking in the sense of

delivering a talk to an audience, I am speaking in the sense of expressing a bunch of theses in a pub).³⁰

It remains to Everett just to say that either distinction is ‘obscure and unexplicated’ (2005:644). But at least as far the ‘mode of predication’ distinction is concerned, there is no obscurity in it. For following Castañeda, one can define internal predication in terms of set-membership: an item *O* internally possesses a property *F* iff that property belongs to the set constituting *O*.³¹ As regards fictional entities, this proposal is very welcome for those realists appealing to that distinction with respect to fictional entities. For they buy an (at least partial) Meinongian picture of what a fictional entity is, namely (some sort of) a set-correlate.^{32,33}

Bibliography

Author 2006. *How Ficta Follow Fiction* (Dordrecht: Springer).

Author 2009. The Seven Consequences of Creationism, *Metaphysica* 10 (forthcoming).

Bianchi, Claudia 2001. *La dipendenza contestuale. Per una teoria pragmatica del significato*, Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane.

Castañeda, Hector-Neri 1989. *Thinking, Language, and Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Evans, Gareth 1978. Can There Be Vague Objects?, *Analysis* 38: 208.

Everett, Anthony 2005. Against Fictional Realism, *Journal of Philosophy* 102: 624-649.

Everett, Anthony 2007. Pretense, Existence, and Fictional Objects, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74: 56-80.

Kroon, Fred 2005. Beliefs about Nothing in Particular, in *Fictionalism in Metaphysics*, ed. Mark Calderon, New York: Oxford University Press: 178-203.

Langacker, Ronald 1991. *Concept, Image and Symbol. The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*, Berlin: De Gruyter.

Nunberg, Geoffrey, Zaenen, Annie 1992. Systematic Polysemy in Lexicology and Lexicography, in *Proceedings of Euralex II*, eds. Hannu Tammola *et al.*, Tampere: University of Tampere, 387-395.

Parsons, Terence 1980. *Nonexistent Objects*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Perry, John 1986. Thought Without Representation, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. vol. 60: 137-151.
- Recanati, François 2000. *Oratio Obliqua, Oratio Recta*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- Recanati, François 2004. *Literal Meaning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, Bertrand 1905a. On Denoting, *Mind* 14: 479-493.
- Russell, Bertrand 1905b. Critical Notice of: A. Meinong, *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*, *Mind* 14: 530-538.
- Schneider, Benjamin, von Solodkoff, Tatiana 2009. In Defence of Fictional Realism, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 59: 138-149.
- Simons, Peter 1990. On What There Isn't: the Meinong-Russell Dispute, in *Philosophy and Logic in Central Europe from Bolzano to Tarski*, Dordrecht: Kluwer: 159-181.
- Thrush, Michael 2001. Do Meinong's Impossible Objects Entail Contradictions?, *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 62: 157-173.
- Walton, Kendall 1990. *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Zalta, Edward 1983. *Abstract Objects*, Dordrecht: Reidel.

¹ Cf. Everett (2005).

² Cf. Russell (1905a,b). Curiously enough, Russell is ordinarily recalled just for having originated the 'paraphrase'- strategy against nonexistent entities centered around his theory of descriptions, whereas he was also committed to non semantically-based ontological arguments against those entities.

³ Cf. Everett (2005:648).

⁴ I put Everett's original numbering in square brackets.

⁵ P₂-pretense is very close to what Recanati (2000:220) labels "the Meinongian pretense". The idea can be traced back to Walton (1990).

⁶ Cf. Everett (2005:638-48).

⁷ Cf. Everett (2005:645).

⁸ This idea is actually suggested by Kroon (2005:191-2).

⁹ At least, one should amend the bridging principle by making it the consequent of a conditional like "If one plays a make-believe game where certain principles of generation are adopted (e.g. one in which one says 'Let us pretend that Little Johnny is a bear'), then a sentence uttered in that game is fictionally true iff something else is really true." (I owe this suggestion to Fred Kroon.) Even so, however, one may wonder whether the truth of that

conditional's antecedent makes its biconditional consequent true as well. For suppose that one such biconditional has (9) as the sentence which in its righthand side is said to be really true and (8) as the sentence which in its lefthand side is said to be fictionally true. Now, the fact that (9) is really true does not make *eo ipso* (8) true in the make-believe game – suppose that (9) were truthfully uttered by Little Johnny's father who, unlike his mother, is not involved in that game. So, that biconditional may well be false (its righthand side is true while its lefthand side is false). Thus, once it figures as a consequent of a conditional which admittedly has a true antecedent of the above kind, it makes that conditional false as well.

¹⁰ In (2007:59), Everett himself acknowledges that this is the route a fictional realist has to take when another mixed sentence joining a FOS (now labelled as FCS) plus a fictional negative existential (FNE, in Everett's labelling) like "Raskolnikov is just a fictional character and consequently doesn't really exist".

¹¹ For reasons that will become clear at the very end of this paper, I use the labelling that has become customary after Castañeda's (1989) usage, rather than sticking to Zalta's (1983) formulation of the distinction in terms of the encoding vs. the exemplifying mode.

¹² For this 'kinds of property'- distinction, cf. notoriously Parsons (1980).

¹³ As is well-known, Russell's original example involved the case of the round square. Yet in order to free myself from the problem of whether the fact that the round square contains incompatible determinations really makes it a contradictory object, I just reformulate Russell's example in terms of a case of a Meinongian object which really is in some sense (as we will see, an objectual rather than a propositional one) a contradictory object. In this I follow a common policy: cf. e.g. Thrush (2001:160).

¹⁴ As is well known, it is hard to find a criterion to tell extranuclear from nuclear properties. Parsons (1980:23) limits himself to provide a non-exhaustive list of extranuclear properties: being existing, being mythical, being fictional, being possible By applying to other cases Parsons' reference to the 'kinds of property'- distinction in order to solve the problem of the existing King of France (see immediately later in the text), one may take all properties predicated in a fictional narration of their protagonists to be 'watered down' counterparts of the corresponding properties predicated of ordinary individuals outside any narration.

¹⁵ As is well known, a similar solution applies to the other charge implicitly raised by Russell (1905a) against Meinongian objects, that of violating the law of excluded middle. A Meinongian object may be such, that neither it has internally *F* nor it has internally *nonF* (or, which is the same, it is such that it neither is **F** nor it is **nonF**), yet it is not such that it is not the case that: either it is internally *F* (**F**) or it is not the case that it is internally *F* (**F**). On Meinongian objects failing to violate the law of noncontradiction and the law of excluded

middle in their propositional form (at least with respect to the aforementioned formulations of the problem, that do not involve any propositional contradiction in the descriptive characterization of the relevant Meinongian object), cf. e.g. Simons (1990:182,185).

¹⁶ Cf. Everett (2005:633-8).

¹⁷ In point of fact, this example mobilizes relational properties such as *being identical with a* and *being identical with b*. Now, one may take these properties to be problematic insofar as they involve fictional entities: as the relevant tale simply pretends that a certain, presumably concrete, individual, is and is not identical with an(other), still presumably concrete, individual, where do those fictional entities come from? Yet apart from the fact that a realist may take this problem as simply showing that fictional entities are already there before that the tale is told – see for this account Parsons (1980:195-6) – the problem only concerns the example. Suppose that the property involved were the nonrelational property *of being selfidentical*; then a treatment such as that given in the text may be provided as well. A *fictum* may well be both internally selfidentical (*selfidentical*) and internally non-selfidentical (*non-selfidentical*) and yet not be such that it is the case that: both it is internally selfidentical (*selfidentical*) and it is not the case that it is internally selfidentical (*selfidentical*).

¹⁸ Cf. Evans (1978).

¹⁹ Cf. Everett (2005:629-30).

²⁰ Ontic indeterminacy *in a story* has not be confused with ontic indeterminacy *with respect to a story*, which is a particular case of *property indeterminacy with respect to a story*: as to a property *F* (or **F**) – in our case, the property of *being identical with b*, or the property of **being identical with b** – and its complement *non-F* (or **non-F**), a story leaves completely open whether a certain of its protagonists (internally) has either. Schneider – von Solodkoff (2009) actually rely on this latter distinction in order to claim that Everett’s argument allegedly in support of his conclusion either does not take this distinction into account or it takes that distinction into account but then it does not support his conclusion. Yet it seems to me that Everett is appealing only to ontic indeterminacy in a story, not to ontic indeterminacy with respect to a story. The real problem for Everett is that ontic indeterminacy in a story does not support *ontic indeterminacy out of a story* (see immediately later in the text), as it would be necessary in order for Everett’s argument to go through.

²¹ Cf. Everett (2005:630-3).

²² Once again, *pace* Schneider – von Solodkoff (2009) I leave aside a further sense of indeterminacy, according to which the story leaves completely open whether there is a certain entity or not.

²³ Cf. Everett (2005:629-633).

²⁴ This is not only trivially the case for pretense theorists, who are obviously not committed to *ficta*, but also for some fictional realists, those who do not take pretense practices as sufficient conditions in order for *ficta* to be there. This is the case for instance with moderate creationists: cf. Author (2006, 2008).

²⁵ As Schneider – von Solodkoff (2009:141) claim, this is a common policy as regards what I have called ontic indeterminacy either in or out of a story.

²⁶ Cf. Everett (2005:644).

²⁷ *Ib.*

²⁸ For which, cf. notoriously Perry (1986).

²⁹ If you are a contextualist with respect to the semantics/pragmatics divide, you will say that this richer meaning always affects the truthconditions of the relevant sentential token involved. For an articulated defense of the contextualist position, cf. Recanati (2004).

³⁰ For similar examples cf. Langacker (1991), Bianchi (2001). For more examples where co-predication is acceptable even if different yet polysemically related senses are involved, cf. e.g. in Nunberg – Zaenen (1992). Curiously enough, Everett seems ready to admit such ‘sloppy’ readings: cf. (2007:61).

³¹ Cf. Castañeda (1989:200). This is why I have chosen Castañeda’s labelling of the ‘mode of predication’-distinction rather than Zalta’s one. For Zalta (1983:12) precisely believes that the two modes involved by the distinction, encoding and exemplification in his terminology, are primitive notions.

³² Cf. again Castañeda (1989). As to myself, I’ve precisely bought one such picture in Author (2006). Here I have tried to remain as much as possible neutral as to either distinction, but there (2006:27-9) I have tried to provide some reasons as to why the ‘mode of predication’-distinction is actually preferable to the ‘kinds of property’-one.

³³ Many thanks to Carola Barbero, Claudia Bianchi and Fred Kroon for helpful discussions with them on these topics.