Assertion and Fiction[*]

Manuel García-Carpintero
BIAP/LOGOS-Departament de Filosofia
Universitat de Barcelona
e-mail: m.garciacarpintero@ub.edu

Abstract

I discuss three issues about the relations between fiction and assertion that have figured prominently in recent debates. In the first section, I discuss questions about assertions in connection with fiction raised by the standard occurrence of *prima facie* empty referential expressions in fictions. In the second, I discuss whether fictions can make assertions, or related assertoric acts. In the third and final section, I discuss the effects that this would pose for the distinction between fiction and non-fiction.

Keywords: assertion; implicature; semantics/pragmatics; indirect speech acts.

1. Reference-Related Issues on Fiction and Assertion

Let us assume, as a starting point, that an assertion is what is done by default by means of declarative sentences; as Williamson (1996, 258) puts it, "[i]n natural language, the default use of declarative sentences is to make assertions". And let us thus consider three sorts of candidates to assertions made with declaratives in connection with fictions:

(1)   Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls.

(2)   According to *Ulysses*, Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls.

(3)   Leopold Bloom is a fictional character.

Consider firstly an utterance of (1) by Joyce, as part of the longer utterance by him of the full discourse which, with a measure of idealization, we can think constitutes the act of putting forward his creation *Ulysses* for us to enjoy. It is distinctive of such uses, which I will be calling *textual*,[1] that they are not intuitively truth-evaluable. To this extent, textual uses of declarative sentences do not at the very least count as default assertions. The other two types differ in that they do intuitively appear to be truth-evaluable, and hence good *prima facie* candidates for it.

There is, firstly, the use of sentences such as (1) that we make when we are reporting what goes on in a fiction. I will call these content-reporting uses *paratextual*; according to Lewis (1978) and others, they are simply elliptic for intuitively equivalent ascriptions of propositional content such as (2). Finally, I will call the uses of sentences such as (3) *metatextual*; they are intuitively truth-evaluable, but not content-reporting, in that they are not (or at least not obviously) equivalent to explicit content ascriptions like (2).

Kripke (2013) argues that a proper account of metatextual uses requires interpreting names such as 'Mr. Leopold Bloom' in them as referring to fictional entities. Van Inwagen (1977) provides an influential argument for such realism about fictional entities: a Quinean appeal to non-eliminable quantification over, and reference to, such entities in *prima facie* serious, truth-evaluable discourse, such as utterances of (3) and related metatextual uses in contexts of literary criticism.[2] Such *ficta* could then be taken to be Meinongian non-existent entities, concrete but non-actual *possibilia*, or (as both Kripke and van Inwagen recommend) abstract existent entities of various sorts, fully-fledged Platonic *abstracta* as in Wolterstorff (1980) or rather created artefacts, as in Salmon (1998), Thomasson (1999, 2003) or Schiffer (2003).[3] Fictional entities of any of these sorts could then be invoked to account for either of the other uses, textual and paratextual, but this requires extra work; for such entities cannot be straightforwardly taken to be the sort of thing capable of eating birds' inner organs.

The intuitive obviousness of negative existentials involving fictional names ('Bloom doesn't exist') counts against non-Meinongian realist views, a point that Everett (2007, 2013 ch. 7) forcefully presses. He (2005, 2013 ch. 8) provides an interesting elaboration on equally well-known indeterminacy concerns about fictional realism, echoing Quine's (1948, 23) indictment: "the possible fat man in that doorway; and, again, the possible bald man in that doorway. Are they the same possible man, or two possible men? How do we decide? How many possible men are there in that doorway? Are there more possible thin ones than fat ones? How many of them are alike?" Everett (2013 ch. 7) and Sainsbury (2010, ch. 3 & 4) also articulate related problems for the Meinongian and possibilist alternatives.

Focusing on metatextual uses leads us to think of the referential expressions in (1)-(3) as in fact referring when they are taken to make assertions. This might address qualms that Millians (those who take the referent of a name to exhaust is semantic content) might otherwise have to endorse the intuitive view that paratextual uses of (1) indeed make assertions – perhaps the ones explicitly made with (2). We could even entertain the view that textual uses of (1) make assertions.[4] The next sections will discuss whether textual uses of declaratives in at least some cases do serve to make assertions. Focusing instead on textual uses leads to a contrasting irrealist picture. When the creator of a work of fiction uses declarative sentences such as (1), or when she uses sentences of other types, we do not intuitively think of her as really performing the speech acts one typically performs with them in default contexts. In such cases, the sentences are used in some form of *pretense*, like the acts that actors perform on stage: they do not need to be drinking whisky, for they are merely pretending to do so; hence, we do not evaluate them by invoking any norms we would apply to non-pretend uses.

Now, if the apparent assertions are merely pretend, the same might apply to the apparent ancillary acts of reference; and in this way an avenue is opened to account for such uses without the need to posit actual referents for fictional singular terms. Walton (1990) has provided a very elaborate and deservedly influential account of textual uses along such lines, which he then

extends to deal with both paratextual and metatextual uses; Everett (2013) advances an illuminating elaboration of the program. But as before with the realist picture, the extension from the best case for the irrealist approach – textual uses – is not straightforward, here because there does not appear to be any pretense in assertions of (2)-(3).

Perhaps the intuitively best option would be to combine fictional realism for the latter with a pretense-theoretic account of authors' uses of sentences like (1); this is in fact Kripke's (2013) "pluralist" suggestion, on which fictional names such as 'Leopold Bloom' have an empty, pretend use in (1), but a non-empty serious one in (3). In addition to the resulting profligacy (which writers favoring uniform accounts object to, cf. Maier (2017, 3)), however, paratextual uses of (1) occupy a problematic middle ground for this ecumenical rapprochement. Also, as Everett (2013, 163-178) emphasizes, there are many mixed cases such as (4) below; for note that here whatever 'Mr. Leopold Bloom' designates is ascribed properties both from the internal, conniving paratextual perspective, but also from an external, metatextual viewpoint:

(4)   At the start of *Ulysses*, Mr. Leopold Bloom – an *alter ego* of himself created by Joyce for his most influential novel – eats with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls.

Everett takes these data as a good reason to extend the pretense-theoretic treatment to paratextual and metatextual uses. This, however, doesn't afford an obvious account of negative existentials such as 'Bloom doesn't exist'; and there remains the intuitively strong impression that (1) in paratextual uses, (2), (3) and (4) make straightforward, truth-evaluable assertions.

Walters (ms) provides a compelling defense of Kripkean pluralism for names, combined with an artefactualist view of the referents of some such names, drawing on ideas also nicely articulated by Everett and Schroeder (2015). Walters rejects Millianism, assuming that empty names are nonetheless meaningful, and he then extends a Waltonian, pretense-theoretic account of textual uses of (1) to paratextual uses. Against Walton (1990) and Everett (2013), however, Walters takes the likes of (2) to make truth-evaluable assertions, in which the use of the names is still the empty one; he assumes some non-Millian semantic account of propositional attitude ascriptions for their that, although he grants to pretense theorists that it is the paratextual pretend use of (1) that grounds assertions such as (2), including empty names. In metatextual uses, however, we find according to him a non-empty homonym of the empty name that occurs in those other uses. It refers to a representation: intuitively, the (created) representation(-type) of Bloom which is a part of the whole representation of the fictional events portrayed in Joyce's *Ulysses*.[5] Walters then goes on to explain mixed cases like (4) on the assumption that they involve a form of independently well-attested metonymy-induced polysemy, as when we straightforwardly apply 'lion' to a representation of what literally, primarily is not a lion, like a statue of one; for we also naturally find similarly mixed cases here. Thus, a sculptor can say this of one of her creations:

(5)   That lion is the best sculpture I've made this month; it is as ferocious as the one we saw yesterday at the zoo.

In previous work I have defended a similar package of views, but assuming a slightly different philosophical ideology. Like Walters, I argued that no adequate pretense-theoretic account can be happily combined with Millian views of singular reference, as in Walton's or Everett's proposals. This is not just for the reasons suggested by Walters; more fundamentally,

we need to explain how the semantic content of (1) contributes to determine the content the fiction-maker proposes readers to imagine, or make-believe (García-Carpintero 2010a, 286-7). By relying on my own version of a non-Millian view of names and other referential expressions,[6] I have defended what I consider a form of irrealism for metatextual discourse: a version of Yablo's (2001) *figuralist* brand of fictionalism, on which the semantic referential apparatus (*de jure* directly referential expressions such as names and indexicals, quantifiers generalizing over the positions they occupy, expressions for identity) is used metaphorically in the likes of (3), deploying the figure of speech called *hypostatization* (García-Carpintero 2010b). It is a rather dead, conventionalized kind of metaphor, so, in contrast with pretense-theoretic fictionalist proposals, on this view utterances in metatextual discourse are straightforward assertions with truth-conditions.[7]

This might suggest that the view is after all realist, committed to referents of some sort for singular terms in metatextual discourse. I do not take it that way. One could follow Brock (2002) and claim that the literal content apparently involving commitment to fictional entities is in fact one along the lines of (8): one about what is true according to a pretense – the pretense that some realist theory is true. Or – like Yablo himself – one could follow Walton (1993) in thinking that this applies in general to metaphors, which are a "prop-oriented" form of make-belief put forward with the aim of asserting a metaphorical content non-committal to fictional entities, through the process that Richard (2000) calls "piggybacking".[8] My own preferred line, however, follows Yablo's (2014) recent development of his views,[9] articulating the view that the truth of sentences including fictional names and their generalizations do not really commit us to their existence; for, when we look at the truth-makers for the claims we make with them (what they are really *about*) we do not find the referents they appear to pick out (cf. also Cameron (2012)). We find instead the "ideas for fictional characters" of Everett & Schroeder (2015), or the representations thereof of Walters (ms). The differences between my preferred story and Walters' artefactualist view might thus perhaps be insubstantial. We end up interpreting (2) and (3) as making genuine assertions, whose truth is grounded on the pretenses thereof in textual and paratextual uses of (1).

2. Assertoric Acts in Fiction

In what remains of the paper, I will discuss whether textual uses might include, or serve to somehow make assertions; i.e., in general, whether fictions as such make assertions, and the philosophical implications this may have. In ordinary critical practice, we take for granted that we can learn from fictions (literary or visual), i.e., that we can acquire new warranted beliefs on that basis.[10] Thus, we assume that realist fictions include truths about the settings in which the fictional events occur, intended as such, and often backed by serious research. This makes understandable, say, Salman Rushdie's criticism of the film *Slumdog Millionaire* that it "piles impossibility on impossibility",[11] given the realist ambitions of the film. We similarly assume that we can acquire experiential knowledge – knowledge of *what it is like* – and knowledge-how from fictions, whether or not they differ from propositional knowledge. Even the most fantastic fictions invite readers to assume truths – say, about human psychology in *Alice in Wonderland*,

to make sense of the behavior of the characters she meets and her interactions with them. But can this be philosophically justified?

In his classical discussion of "truth in fiction" (i.e., of how fictional content is determined), Lewis (1978) envisaged two ways of learning from fiction. The first he derives from the role played by an assumption that has come to be known (after Walton (1990)) as the *Reality Principle* in going beyond what is explicitly presented in fictions in order to determine their content – a principle roughly to the effect that we can take to be "true in the fiction" what is true *simpliciter*, to the extent that it is consistent with what is explicitly made part of the content of the fiction: "There may be an understanding between the author and his readers to the effect that what is true in his fiction, on general questions if not on particulars, is not to depart from what he takes to be the truth".[12] Along similar lines, Gendler (2000, 76) has explained how principles allowing the import of truths about the actual world to the content of fictions are a coin whose reverse side are corresponding *export principles*, allowing audiences in some cases (realist fiction genres, such as historical novels, biopics, etc.) to infer from fictional contents truths about the actual world. This suggests a possible mechanism accounting for how we can learn straightforward empirical truths from fictions, both about particular matters of fact and about universal truths. It lies behind our acceptance of what is said in these cases:

(6)   New Providence, the island containing Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, is a drab sandy slab of land fringed with some of the most beautiful beaches in the world (from I. Fleming, *Thunderball*, 1963, London, Pan Books, 116, quoted in Friend 2008, 159).

(7)   Nonhuman animals have gone to court before. Arguably, the first ALF action in the United States was the release of two dolphins in 1977 from the University of Hawaii – (K. J. Fowler, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, 305; from Stock, 2017, 120).

Gendler calls this inferential mechanism "*narrative as clearinghouse*: I export things from the story that you the story-teller have intentionally and consciously imported, adding them to my stock in the way that I add knowledge gained by testimony". This supports complaints (such as Rushdie's regarding *Slumdog Millionaire*) about fictions that potentially mislead in so far as they allow audiences to infer falsehoods by invoking such export principles. Friend (2006) offers a good discussion of an excellent example, Gore Vidal's *Lincoln*. Here are two further illustrations of this familiar inference process that advocates of so-called "literary humanism" (Gaskin, 2013) have defended, from reviews of recent film releases, one giving praise and another criticism. The first is Christian Caryl's (2015) criticism of alleged inaccuracies in Alan Turing's biopic *The Imitation Game* (2014), providing different respects in which the movie "is a bizarre departure from the historical record". The other comes from a review by Ian Buruma ("Russia and China: The Movie", http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/authoritarian-capitalism-russia-china-by-ian-buruma-2014-11):

> The times we live in are often most clearly reflected in the mirror of art. Much has been written about post-communism in Russia and China. But two recent films, Jia Zhangke's *A Touch of Sin*, made in China in 2013, and Andrey Zvyagintsev's *Leviathan*, made in Russia in 2014, reveal the social and political landscapes of these countries more precisely than anything I have seen in print.

As Friend (2014) and Ichino & Currie (2017) point out, however, it is not easy to develop an epistemology that could lend support to such contentions in a sufficiently articulated way. Part of the problem has to do with the indirectness with which the constative acts to be found in fictions that these claims presuppose are conveyed, about which I'll say more below. There are further epistemological worries, which Friend and Ichino & Currie discuss, relating to an apparent excess of credulity to which, some empirical results suggest, readers are prone– in particular data from Daniel Gilbert and colleagues that Matravers (2014, 27) aligns in support of the claim that there is no significant difference between our engagement with fictions and with "representations generally". Nonetheless, both Friend and Ichino & Currie go on to provide reasons to think that learning from fiction is possible. On the one hand, they give reasons for taking the results from the relevant experiments with a pinch of salt; as Graham (2010) and Sperber et al. (2010) argue, we also have filter mechanisms of "epistemic vigilance" (as the latter authors call them) that allow us to be far less credulous on issues that matter to us. On the other, they suggest epistemological stories that make the acquisition of knowledge from fiction intelligible.

Fricker (2012) argues against this, on the basis of the indirectness of any constative acts found in what primarily is an act of fiction-making. Consider a stock example in recent debates on the semantics/pragmatics divide. Peter asks Sally whether John will join them for a dinner Peter is about to book, and Sally replies, "John has had dinner". There is a primary message here, the assertion that John has had dinner shortly before the dialogue, and a secondary message, the assertion that John will not want to join them for dinner. According to Fricker, only the primary message can be asserted – but not the secondary, insinuated or indirectly conveyed one. She offers two reasons. First, a secondary message will be too ambiguous for the speaker to fully commit to it. Second, the audience will have to choose to draw certain inferences and it is thus they, not the speaker, who are responsible for the inferences that they choose to draw.

To assuage doubts like this, Ichino & Currie offer an alternative model to explain the acquisition of beliefs from fictions. Readers take the way the work is written to indicate something about the author's serious beliefs; they have some confidence in the reliability of those beliefs and hence some confidence that the propositions believed are true. Thus, we might take the authors of *Leviathan* and *A Touch of Sin* to be in a position to have the knowledge of their societies given by the films. We might take them as creating the films to put us in a position to acquire it, through something like the "narrative as clearinghouse" procedure that Gendler identifies. And we might respond to the film by accepting the corresponding invitations to form beliefs. Similarly, Caryl's criticism assumes that Turing's biopic invites inferences of the same sort, and objects to it based on the falsity of the beliefs thereby formed. The films are primarily fictions. On the account to be presented in the next section, they are thereby primarily subject to norms according to which they should present content that interested readers might find worthwhile imagining. But this is compatible with their inclusion of straightforward constative acts concerning parts of those contents, subject thereby to truth-related norms. It is even compatible with taking their inclusion of such assertions as contributing to their satisfying their more specific norm as fictions, given conventionally established expectations about the genres to which they belong.[13]

A detailed epistemic analysis of such inferences would, however, be no easy matter. Friend (2014) uses ideas on safety and epistemic competence from Sosa; in previous work (Friend 2008) she had invoked an alternative safety framework for similar purposes. Graham (2010)

provides an evolutionary perspective that could also be put to use here. Note also that the genus of constatives does not only include Williamson's (1996) species of *flat-out assertion*. Claims made in a philosophy talk or paper are not such flat-out assertions; they are not supposed to be accepted just by comprehending the force and content with which they are presented, plus perhaps the absence of reasons to distrust the agent, or the presence of positive reasons to trust her, depending on the correct epistemology of testimony.[14] The illocutionary point of other, related speech acts in Green's (2017a) "assertive family" is instead something like *to make or present some claims to the audience, calling their attention to considerations in their favor*. Fictions also include constatives of this kind, and other acts in such family, including educated guesses, conjectures, and presuppositions. This leads us to the second of the two ways through which we can learn from fictions I mentioned above, which Lewis (1978, 278-9) also envisaged:

> Fiction can offer us contingent truths about this world. It cannot take the place of non-fictional evidence, to be sure. But sometimes evidence is not lacking. We who have lived in the world for a while have plenty of evidence, but we may not have learned as much from it as we could have done. This evidence bears on a certain proposition. If only that proposition is formulated, straightway it will be apparent that we have very good evidence for it. If not, we will continue not to know it. Here, fiction can help us. If we are given a fiction such that the proposition is obviously true in it, we are led to ask: and is it also true *simpliciter?* And sometimes, when we have plenty of unappreciated evidence, to ask the question is to know the answer.

Gendler (*op. cit.*, 76) calls this second inferential process "*narrative as factory*: I export things from the story whose truth becomes apparent as a result of thinking about the story itself. These I add to my stock the way I add knowledge gained by modeling". Thus, to illustrate it again with reviews of recently released films, Dan Kois writes in *Slate* that Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* is "both a singular work … and a universal one, reflecting the elemental formative experiences of nearly every viewer, even those who don't … have a lot in common with Mason or Samantha or Olivia or Mason Sr. It's … a profound statement about the lives we live".[15] Several writers have argued that it is in these acts of *putting forward for our consideration* (perhaps in ways that can only be fully appreciated through the conscious experiences we can obtain from fully worked out narratives) that we find the most significant forms of knowledge we can acquire from fiction. For example, Cora Diamond has argued that literature provides knowledge by leading us to "attend to the world and what is in it, in a way that will involve the exercise of all our faculties" (Diamond 1995, 296). In deservedly influential work, Martha Nussbaum emphasizes how literature enriches our experience and understanding of the world: "The point is that in the activity of literary imagining we are led to imagine and describe with greater precision, focusing our attention on each word, feeling each event more keenly" (Nussbaum 1990, 47-48). Literature deepens our knowledge, Nussbaum suggests, by making details of the world salient to us.

We can illustrate this second way in which we can learn from fiction by discussing what appear to be thematic claims made in fictions about the very philosophical matter we have been discussing – the possibility of acquiring knowledge from fiction. Being professionally interested in the topic, we should expect fictions to convey constatives about it. And of course, there are many examples of this kind. In a previous paper on this topic (García-Carpintero 2007, 203-4), I quoted in full (my own translation of) a short story by Julio Cortázar, "A Continuity of Parks". It

features a reader "transported" to what he reasonably takes to be a merely fictional story which, unfortunately unbeknownst to him, narrates a succession of events in fact simultaneously unfolding while he reads, eventually leading to (one infers) his being killed "offscreen" in the story's denouement. As I explain there, it is reasonable to take the story to make points about the topic of this essay. Which points? An obvious one is modal:[16] there might be fictions whose contents are entirely true. This would be a philosophical claim, contradicting some views on fiction. Drawing on recent work on the epistemology of modality, Stokes (2006) elaborates on how fictions support such modal claims.[17] The basic idea is that they make situations conceivable; under certain assumptions, developed in different ways by different philosophers, this supports a claim that what is thus conceivable is thereby also possible. Once more, Lewis envisaged this: "Fiction might serve as a means for discovery of modal truth … Here the fiction serves the same purpose as an example in philosophy … the philosophical example is just a concise bit of fiction."[18]

A possible model for explaining these inferences is that of indirect speech acts.[19] Grice (1975) offered a deservedly influential analysis for a specific case, conversational implicatures, in which assertions are indirectly conveyed by other assertions. The maxims that Grice provided were attuned to that case and cannot be generalized. For instance, the maxim of quality ("Try to make your contribution one that is true", *op. cit.*, 27) cannot be applied to explain how assertions are conveyed by questions, or to how assertives are conveyed by fictions for that matter, because questions and fictions are not constitutively either true or false. But the Cooperative Principle ("make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange" *ibid.*, 26), from which Grice derives the specific maxims, should be invoked in any general account of indirect speech acts. The engagement with a fiction can be taken as a "conversation", a cooperative undertaking involving authors and their expected audiences; one in which the partners know little of each other, which delineates how the cooperative principle can reasonably apply.[20] Also, as in the previous case of facts exported from fictions, genre conventions and related assumptions will be relevant. We assume that, even though the utterly unexpected denouement for such a short story already makes it sufficiently gratifying, it is common for serious literary authors such as Cortázar to use their fictions to make claims like the one I ventured to articulate above.

The two ways of conveying constatives I have discussed rely on hermeneutical processes. Because of this, they create more indetermination than that which already afflicts those directly conveyed by uttering sentences in the declarative mood in default contexts, using expressions in their straightforward literal way.[21] As the debate on the semantics/pragmatics divide in the past three decades has shown, this already requires a share of hermeneutics and hence creates a good measure of indetermination. I was tentative in stating the philosophical point of Cortázar's story, and that was a relatively easy case because, as suggested, it is so short that it can be taken as a philosophical thought experiment – but a thought experiment intended to support exactly which philosophical view? From what we know about Cortázar, in all probability the thought experiment was meant to support an altogether opposite view about the nature of fiction than my own, outlined below. Namely, one close to Goodman's (1976), Friend (2012) or Matravers (2014), according to which there is no constitutive difference between fiction and non-fiction, only one of degree relative to the number of truths – i.e., (for him) propositions *counted as true* by some contextually trusted epistemology. So Cortázar would not have put the point of the story

as I did two paragraphs back, but perhaps rather like this: there might be works we take to be fictions that are not in fact fictions.[22]

This also appears to be the main point of Marías's *Dark Back of Time*. Here the more essayistic form of the fiction makes it easier to identify it. He declares right at the beginning:

> I believe I've still never mistaken fiction for reality, though I have mixed them together more than once, as everyone does, not only novelists or writers but everyone who has recounted anything since the time we know began … words – even when spoken, even at their crudest – are in and of themselves metaphorical and therefore imprecise, and cannot be imagined without ornament, though it is often involuntary; there is ornament in even the most arid exposition and frequently in interjections and insults as well. All anyone has to do is introduce an "as if" into the story, or not even that, all you need to do is use a simile, comparison or figure of speech … and fiction creeps into the narration of what happened, altering or falsifying it. The time-honored aspiration of any chronicler or survivor– to tell what happened, give an account of what took place, leave a record of events and crimes and exploits – is, in fact, a mere illusion or chimera, or, rather, the phrase and concept themselves are already metaphorical and partake of fiction. "To tell what happened" is inconceivable and futile, or possible only as invention. The idea of testimony is also futile and there has never been a witness who could truly fulfill his duty. … Yet in these pages I'm going to place myself on the side of those who have sometimes claimed to be telling what really happened or pretended to succeed in doing so, I'm going to tell what happened, or was ascertained, or simply known—what happened in my experience or in my fabulation or to my knowledge" (*op. cit.*, 7-9).

Here Marías seems to understand 'fiction' in the sense of *falsehood*, and he uses familiar arguments to make his point; one of them is just the observation by Friend (2008), that non-fictions include contents presented to be imagined and not to be believed. This would also explain the reasons he provides throughout the book to mock those whom he takes to mistake fiction for reality. The book discusses the reception of his earlier novel, *All Souls*. He questions people who (reasonably, in my view), taking the book to be a sort of *roman à clef* or autobiographical novel, make "narrative as clearinghouse" inferences of the kind we have examined above. His argument against these inferences appears to be that they are wrong in some cases, and this does not detract from the value of the work: his nameless narrator has properties that Marías himself does not have, for instance. His point is well taken – this is one of the main reasons I mentioned above why the epistemology of learning from fiction is tricky. As also indicated above, non-skeptics deal with this by contending that learning from testimony in general does create similar challenges; Friend (2014) and Ichino & Currie (2017) argue that exercising adequate vigilance suffices to make the beliefs we acquire from fictions justified enough to count as knowledge.

3. Assertions in Fiction and the Fiction/Non-fiction Distinction

In this concluding section I'll discuss some consequences of the admission that fictions make assertions, and other acts in Green's (2017a) assertive family, for the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. The debate to be rehearsed assumes a popular view already considered in the previous section, on which fictions result from specific speech or communicative acts of *fiction-making*: fictions are products of acts by which the author or authors invite their audiences to imagine or make-believe the fictional contents.[23]

There are two contrasting schools of thought on the nature of speech acts. Searle (1969) follows Austin (1962) in thinking of them as social practices defined by social norms; while many other writers follow Grice (1957) in taking them to be definable in psychological terms, appealing to a peculiar kind of intention. What is at stake in such debates? Austinians point out that speech acts might well take place even when their authors lack the complex intentions that Griceans posit.[24] A clerk in an information booth makes an assertion when she utters 'the plane will arrive on time', even though she does not care at all what psychological impact this has on her audience. Similarly, a fiction-maker might create a perfectly polished fiction, even though she does not care about producing any imaginative impact on any audience – she might just put it in the drawer afterwards. Austinians argue that speech acts are governed by norms, not just "regulative" ones (clarity, politeness, wit) but *constitutive* ones, and that this has a stronger impact on the determination of the speech act made than whatever communicative intentions the author had. Thus, for instance, the clerk might be criticized if she cannot have known the information she provided (we had been reliably told that the plane just took off from the departing airport, and so we reply, "you cannot know that!"). A fiction can be praised based on an interesting, worth-imagining interpretation that competent audiences ascribe to it, even if it had not occurred to her author in its details.

In previous work (García-Carpintero 2013a, forthcoming-b) I have defended a speech-act account of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. Like Currie (1990) and others, I propose to think of fictions as speech acts. Unlike them, however, I take Walton's normative characterization seriously,[25] assuming an Austinian account of such acts in terms of social norms in contrast to the Gricean account in terms of psychological reflexive intentions. On my proposal, while non-fictions constitutively result from *constatives* – acts of *saying*, the genus of speech acts characterized in terms of norms requiring truth for their correctness, of which assertion is the core species – fictions constitutively result from *directives*. This is the genus, of which commands are the core species; fictions are thereby (Alston, 2000) characterized by a norm of providing the intended audience with reasons to imagine the fiction's content.

More specifically, I used Williamson's (1996) "simple" characterization, deploying a constitutive norm that uniquely characterizes the act by its normative essence.[26] For assertion – the act we make by default when uttering declarative sentences – I suggested a *knowledge-provision* rule,[27] a norm requiring for correctness that knowledge be made available to the intended audience. An assertion with content *p* (say, that Łódź is in Ukraine) is the act whose result is subject to this rule: it is correct only if it puts its audience in a position to know *p* (i.e., that Łódź is in Ukraine). Other constatives have weaker requirements, bare truth or justification for *guessing* or *conjecturing*, etc. Norms like this are *sui generis*: they do not have their sources in moral or prudential codes, but in specifically illocutionary ones. They are defeasible and *pro*

tanto: they can be overridden by stronger norms. And it is possible to violate them, thereby rendering the acts not non-existent, but wrong. Thus, there are plenty of situations in which *p* is asserted but the audience is not thereby put in a position to know *p*, simply because *p* is false (Łódź is not in Ukraine, but in Poland), or justification is lacking. The assertion is then wrong, relative to norms constitutive of such speech act.

In the case of *fiction-making*, I modeled my proposal on a normative account of directives derived from Alston's (2000). I took commands to be subject to the norm that they are correct only if their audiences are thereby provided with *a reason* to see to it that their content obtains. The reason is to be based on different sources, depending on the specific nature of the directive: the authority of the speaker in the case of commands, or the good will or presumed interests of the audience in the case of requests, suggestions, or proposals. Again, the norms are *sui generis*, defeasible and *pro tanto*, and it should be possible for them to be broken – as when a speaker suggests that the audience do something which has no chance of satisfying their relevant desires. My proposal was that a fiction with the content *p* is a result of an act that is correct only if it gives relevant audiences (audiences of the intended kind, with the desire to engage with such works) a reason to imagine *p*. The reasons in question have to do with whatever makes engaging with good fictions worthwhile; say, to experience the succession of emotions provoked by engagement with well-drafted, suspenseful thrillers, for those of us who enjoy these things.

A reason I offered for that view was that normative accounts fare better relative to the intentionalism/conventionalism debate about the interpretation of fictions. As mentioned, there are compelling criticisms of Gricean accounts of core speech acts such as assertion, based on examples showing that, even when lacking the relevant Gricean communicative intentions, speakers nonetheless make assertions. Similarly, a fiction might have a specific interpretation, even if the author has not intended it to be imagined in its fully detailed specificity (García-Carpintero, forthcoming-b). I also argued that the view affords a good response to a forceful objection presented in a series of papers by Stacie Friend (2008, 2011, 2012) to Currie and his followers. She contends that "there is no conception of 'imagining' or 'make-believe' that distinguishes a response specific to fiction as opposed to non-fiction" (Friend 2012, 182-3), recommending "that we give up the quest for necessary and sufficient conditions for fictionality" (Friend 2008, 166). She argues for this by addressing the Gricean specific forms of the speech-act account that her target writers have provided. But I have argued that a normative view supplies us with the option of casting off the problematic features of Gricean accounts.

What I find most appealing in speech-act accounts is precisely the clear light they throw on the relation between assertion and fiction; this virtue, however, is lost in the versions I am questioning, in my view because of their intentionalist underpinnings. Of course, there is an ordinary sense of 'fiction' in which this just means *false*. But such intuitive use of 'fiction' and derivatives is not the one at stake here, but rather the one used in the classification of works (I will mostly focus on literary ones, but I'll also use examples of fictional films, which raise the same issues) as fictional or non-fictional.

Like Walton (1991, 79), when it comes to this sense, I do not find anything intuitively wrong in counting works consisting only of truths as fictional. The already mentioned novel by Javier Marías, *Dark Back of Time* (1998), is a case in point. There is no single utterance that I would say was clearly made up (even though, as I made clear above, there are several with which I disagree). Still, this is not a borderline case; it is primarily a fictional work, a novel. With most

writers (including most anti-intentionalists), I take the classification of a work in a given category to be up to the author, *ceteris paribus*. Marías has published the book as a novel; and there is no reason to think he only did that, say, for fear of censorship, or to prevent legal charges. He did declare, when presenting the book,[28] that it *could be called a false novel*.[29] But this was right after saying that *it is not an autobiography or a memoir, but a work of fiction*.[30] To be sure, the work is also assertive, typically described by critics as *weaving fiction and fact*. Marías himself affirmed that "the narrator is me, with my name and last name, and everything I tell is true, or they are things with which I am acquainted or are known or speculated by me".[31] But only the intentionalist characterization of fictions that Gricean theorists are relying upon leads them to find a problem here, as I will now explain.

Currie (1990, 42-5) provided four thought-experiments to intuitively support his view that fictive intent is not sufficient for fictionality;[32] the content must also be at most "accidentally" true, a condition which he articulated as the absence of counterfactual dependence of the utterance on the represented facts (1990, 47). The thought experiments have not convinced everybody;[33] but others have suggested alternative similar constraints. Thus, Lamarque & Olsen (1994, 44) have a requirement that the audience adopt the *fictive stance* towards fictive contents, by inferring neither that the utterer of a fiction believes them nor that they obtain. Davies (2007, 46) suggests that the author of a fictional narrative flouts a "fidelity constraint" – a requirement to include in the narrative only events believed to have occurred, and to present them as occurring in the order they are believed to have occurred.

Currie, Davies, and Lamarque & Olsen thus adopt what Friend describes as the *mere-make-believe* approach to fictionality. "The guiding intuition is that belief, *rather than* imagining, is appropriate for non-accidentally true content … the kind of imagining prescribed by fiction must be imagining *without belief*. Call this attitude *mere-make-believe*" (2011, 165). "… fiction (as opposed to non-fiction) invites mere-make-believe, whereas non-fiction (as opposed to fiction) invites belief. This proposal may seem plausible given that mere-make-believe is appropriate to those features of a work that are *made up* (and known to be so), and it is common to associate fiction with such features" (2008, 158-9).

As Currie (1990, 48-9) acknowledges, given the facts about assertions in fictions rehearsed in the previous section, this has the result that most fictional works are "a patchwork of fiction-making and assertion". As we indicated there, realist fictions include truths about the settings in which the fictional events occur, intended as such. The reverse is also the case: non-fictions standardly traffic in mere-make-believe. Historians, journalists and philosophers ask us to imagine possible scenarios, or in other acknowledged ways make up parts of the contents they put forward. On the accounts we are considering, such works end up as patchworks of fact and fiction. The accounts are thus left with no easy way of concurring with pre-theoretic intuitions when it comes to determining their global classification in a principled way. This is the *patchwork problem* for these views. It is especially acute in the case of literary fictions, given their aesthetic aspiration to cohesive integration. As many have pointed out regarding the celebrated example of Anna Karenina's first sentence, "real setting" claims typically play an essential role in generating the core elements of the contents the fiction asks readers to imagine, and henceforth must be themselves imagined.

On my diagnosis, what leads these authors to add the mere-make-believe conditions that creates the patchwork problem are not shaky intuitions about problematic cases, but their

reliance on Gricean intentionalist accounts. The intention to lead your audience to imagine a given content through its very recognition hardly distinguishes fictions from other speech acts, including assertions; for audiences need also to imagine, or at least consider, the contents of assertions. Matravers's (2014, 21) recent criticism of the "consensus view" that "there is a necessary connection between a proposition being fictional and there being a prescription (of any sort) that we imagine it" follows in the footsteps of Friend's (pp. 38-9, 92); but he also has a criticism of his own that emphasizes this point. As he puts it, "my objection to Currie is that his functional characterization of this activity [imagining] … does not apply only to fiction but to our engaging with representations generally" (p. 27). He mentions in support empirical data concerning the psychological processes involved in engaging with fiction and non-fiction.

My proposal does not need to contend that contents put forward as fiction cannot be at the same time presented as non-fiction, or the other way around; nor that our psychological engagement with them differs. The difference between fiction and non-fiction lies in the *norms* the agent is beholden, and the resulting *commitments* she incurs, and not in further attitudes – such as that the imagined contents are taken to be at most accidentally true, or objects of the fictive stance. An act's being subject to the norm constitutive of fiction-making that I outlined above makes it ideal for putting forward interesting made-up content, but this is not mandatory. Against Friend, fiction and non-fiction can be defined by necessary and sufficient conditions, albeit normative/axiological ones. An act produces a fiction if and only if it is subject to the fiction-making norm as its defining constitutive norm; an act produces a non-fiction (assertion) if and only if it is subject to a rule requiring truth for its correctness as its defining constitutive norm. It is in this way that we may still capture "the guiding intuition … that belief, *rather than* imagining, is appropriate for non-accidentally true content … the kind of imagining prescribed by fiction must be imagining *without belief*" (Friend 2011, 165). There is an essential difference between fiction and non-fiction, but it lies in the norms binding speakers. Matravers (2014, 95) contends: "We represent (some part of) the content of a narrative we engage in a mental model. The narrative could be either non-fiction or fiction. Some of these propositions we also believe, some we do not believe. That is it". That may be right as a psychological matter; but it does not follow that there is no distinction to be drawn between fiction and non-fiction. The normative proposal shows how we can trace it.

On the account that Friend advances, invitations to imagine are mere *standard* properties of fictions.[34] Fiction is a genre, defined by relational, historically changing features: what counts as non-fiction in a context might be rightly classified as fiction in another, and the other way around. Now, there is surely something right about this. To use one of her examples, if a historian were to put invented speeches into the mouths of his characters the way Tacitus did, he would be harshly criticized by his colleagues; the material would be counted as non-fiction that does not meet the standards of the discipline. But perhaps Tacitus' contemporaries accepted a convention by which such material is to be counted as a helpful fiction, and hence would not have criticized him. However, it does not follow from this that *the categories* of fiction and non-fiction *themselves* are subject to such historical vagaries. It is entirely compatible with the fact that non-fiction has a normative essence, and likewise fiction. For this leaves open the question what it is that determines that specific acts are to be subject to particular norms. I mentioned before that the intentions of the agent play an important role in this, but there are other significant factors, including those having to do with the historically changing genre conventions

that Friend mentions. Invitations to imagine (elaborated as the norms I suggested) are still on this view constitutive of fictions, not mere standard features of them. Friend never provides any reason to think that there could be fictions not involving invitations to imagine.[35]

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed three issues concerning assertions in connection with fictions. I have argued that declaratives about fictions using empty fictional names can nonetheless make assertions; that fictions themselves make assertions and put readers in a position to acquire knowledge; and that this is nonetheless compatible with a categorical difference between fictions and non-fictions, traced on the basis of a speech-act account.

References

Alston, William (2000): *Illocutionary Acts & Sentence Meaning*, Ithaca: Cornell U.P.

Armour-Garb, B., & Woodbridge, J., (2015): *Pretense and Pathology*, Cambridge, CUP.

Austin, John (1962): *How to Do Things with Words*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Bach, K & Harnish RM, 1979, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Bonomi, Andrea (2008): "Fictional Contexts", in P. Bouquet, L. Serafini and R. Thomason (eds), *Perspectives on context,* Stanford: CSLI Publications, 213-248.

Brock, Stuart (2002): "Fictionalism about fictional characters", *Noûs* 36 (1):1–21.

Brock, S. & Everett, A. (2015): *Fictional Objects*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buchanan, Ray (2013): "Conversational Implicature, Communicative Intentions, and Content", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 43, 720-740.

Cameron, Ross (2012): "How to Be a Nominalist and a Fictional Realist", in *Art and Abstract Objects*, Christy Mag Uidhir (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 179-96.

Currie, Gregory (1990): *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, David (2007): *Aesthetics and Literature*. London: Continuum.

Diamond, Cora (1995): "Anything but Argument?," in her *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 291-308.

Egan, David (2016): "Literature and Thought Experiments", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74: 139-150.

Elgin, Catherine (2014): "Fiction as Thought Experiment", *Perspectives on Science* 22: 221-241.

Evans, Gareth (1982): *The Varieties of Reference*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Everett, Anthony (2005): "Against Fictional Realism", *Journal of Philosophy* 102, 624–49.

Everett, Anthony (2007): "Pretense, Existence, and Fictional Objects", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74, 56–80.

Everett, Anthony (2013): *The Nonexistent*, Oxford: OUP.

Everett, A. & Schroeder, T. (2015): "Ideas for Stories," in S. Brock & A. Everett (eds.), *Fictional Objects*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 275-293.

Fricker, Elizabeth (2012): "Stating and Insinuating," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* sup. vol. LXXXVI, 61-94.

Friend, Stacie (2006): "Narrating the Truth (More or Less)", in Matthew Kieran and Dominic McIver Lopes (eds.), *Knowing Art: Essays in Aesthetics and Epistemology*, Dordrecht: Springer, 35-49.

Friend, Stacie (2008): 'Imagining Fact and Fiction', in Kathleen Stock and Katherine Thomson-Jones (eds.), *New Waves in Aesthetics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave 150-69.

Friend, Stacie (2011): "Fictive Utterance and Imagining," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, sup. vol. 85, 163-180.

Friend, Stacie (2012): "Fiction as a Genre," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 92, 179-208.

Friend, Stacie (2014): "Believing in Stories", in G. Currie, M. Kieran, A. Meskin and J. Robson (eds) *Aesthetics and the Sciences of Mind*, Oxford: OUP, 227-47.

Friend, Stacie (2017): "The Real Foundations of Fictional Worlds", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 95(1), 29-42.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2004): "Assertion and the Semantics of Force-Markers", in C. Bianchi (ed.), *The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction*, CSLI Lecture Notes, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 133-166.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2007): "Fiction-making as an Illocutionary Act", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65, 203-216.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2010a): 'Fictional Entities, Theoretical Models and Figurative Truth', in Frigg, R, and Hunter, M. (eds.), *Beyond Mimesis and Convention – Representation in Art and Science*, Springer, 139-68.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2010b): 'Fictional Entities, Theoretical Models and Figurative Truth', in Frigg, R, and Hunter, M. (eds.), *Beyond Mimesis and Convention – Representation in Art and Science*, Springer, 139-68.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2013a): "Norms of Fiction-Making", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 53: 339-357, DOI: 10.1093/aesthj/ayt021.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2013b): "Explicit Performatives Revisited", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 49, 2013, 1-17, DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2013.01.005.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2016): 'Indirect Assertions', *Polish Journal of Philosophy*, vol. X(1), 13-49.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (2017): "The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names", *Mind* doi:10.1093/mind/fzx010.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (forthcoming-a): "Assertions in Fictions: An Indirect Speech Act Account", *Grazer Philosophische Studien*.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (forthcoming-b): "On the Nature of Fiction-Making: Grice or Austin?", *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

García-Carpintero, Manuel (forthcoming-c): *Tell Me What You Know*. Oxford: OUP.

Gaskin, Richard (2013): *Language, Truth, and Literature*, Oxford: OUP.

Gaut, Berys (2006): "Art and Cognition", in Matthew Kieran (ed), *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, Oxford: Blackwell, 115–126.

Gendler, Tamar Szabó (2000): "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance", *Journal of Philosophy* 97 (2), 55-81.

Graham, Peter J. (2010): "Testimonial Entitlement and the Function of Comprehension", in A. Haddock, A. Millar, and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Social Epistemology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 148-74.

Green, Mitchell (2007): *Self-Expression*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Green, Mitchell (2017a): "Assertion", *Oxford Handbooks Online*, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935314.013.8.

Green, Mitchell (2017b): "Narrative Fiction as a Source of Knowledge", in P. Olmos (ed.), *Narration as Argument*, Cham, Springer, 47-61.

Grice, H. P. (1975): "Logic and Conversation", in P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3, New York: Academic Press, 41-58. Also in Grice, H.P., *Studies in The Ways of Words*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P. 1991, 22-40, from which I quote.

Hoek, Daniel (2018): "Conversational Exculpature", *Philosophical Review* 127(2), 151-196.

Hoffman, Sarah (2004): "Fiction as Action", *Philosophia*, 31, 513–29.

Ichikawa, J. & Jarvis, B. (2009): "Though-Experiments and Truth in Fiction", *Philosophical Studies* 142, 221-246.

Ichino, A., & Currie, G. (2017): "Truth and Trust in Fiction", in E. Sullivan-Bissett, H. Bradley, & P. Noordhof (eds.) *Art and Belief*, Oxford: OUP, 53-83.

Kind, Amy (2018): "How Imagination Gives Rise to Knowledge", in Fiona Macpherson and Fabian Dorsch (eds), *Perceptual Memory and Perceptual Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kripke, Saul (2013): *Reference and Existence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lamarque, P. & Olsen, S. H. (1994): *Truth, Fiction and Literature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Langland-Hassan, Peter (2016): "On Choosing What to Imagine", in A. Kind (ed.) *Knowledge through Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 61–82.

Lewis, David (1978): "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, 37-46. Reprinted with postscripts in D. Lewis, *Philosophical Papers, vol. 1*, pp. 261-280, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, from which I quote.

Livingston, Paisley (2005): *Art and Intention*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ludlow, Peter (2006): "From Sherlock Holmes and Buffy to Klingon and Norrathian Platinum Pieces: Prfetence, Contextualism, and the Myth of Fiction", *Philosophical Issues* 16, 162-183.

Macdonald, Margaret (1954): "The Language of Fiction", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplementary Volume 28, 165-184.

Maier, Emar (2017): "Fictional Names in Psychologistic Semantics", *Theoretical Linguistics* 43(1-2), 1-45.

Marías, Javier (1998): *Negra espalda del tiempo*, Madrid: Alfaguara. (English translation by Esther Allen, Vintage International 2013, from which I quote.)

Martinich, A. P., and Stroll, A. (2007): *Much Ado about Nonexistence: Fiction and Reference*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Matravers, Derek (2014): *Fiction and Narrative*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McEwan, Ian (2001): *Atonement*, London: Radom House.

Ninan, Dilip (2017): "Names in Fiction", *Theoretical Linguistics* 43(1-2), 61-70.

Quine, W.V.O. (1948): "On What There Is," *Review of Metaphysics* 2, 21-38. Reprinted in in his *From a Logical Point of View,* 2nd edition, revised, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-19.

Reicher, Maria (2012): "Knowledge from Fiction", in Jürgen Daiber et al. (eds.), *Understanding Fiction. Knowledge and Meaning in Literature*. Paderborn: Mentis, 114-132.

Riffaterre, Michael (1990): *Fictional Truth*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Sainsbury, Mark (2010): *Fiction and Fictionalism*, London: Routledge.

Salmon, Nathan (1998): "Nonexistence," *Noûs* 32, pp. 277-319.

Schiffer, Stephen (2003): *The Things We Mean*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Searle, John (1969): *Speech Acts*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge.

Searle, John (1974-5): "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse", *New Literary History*, 6, 319-332; also in his *Expression and Meaning*, Cambridge: CUP, 1979, 58-75, from which I quote.

Sperber, D. et al. (2010): "Epistemic Vigilance", *Mind & Language* 25, 359-393.

Stock, Kathleen (2017): *Only Imagine*, Oxford: OUP.

Stokes, Dustin (2006): "Art and Modal Knowledge", in Matthew Kieran and Dominic McIver Lopes (eds), *Knowing Art*, Dordrecht: Springer, 67–81.

Thomasson, Amie (1999): *Fiction and Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

Thomasson, Amie L. (2003): "Speaking of fictional characters", *Dialectica* 57: 205-23.

van Inwagen, Peter (1977) "Creatures of Fiction", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14, 299-308.

Voltolini, Alberto (2006): *How Ficta Follow Fiction. A Syncretistic Account of Fictional Entities*, Springer, Dordrecht.

Walters, Lee (ms): "Fictional Names".

Walton, Kendall (1990): *Mimesis and Make-Believe*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P.

Williamson, Timothy (1996): "Knowing and Asserting", *Philosophical Review* 105, pp. 489-523; included with some revisions as chapter 11 of his *Knowledge and Its Limits*, Oxford UP, New York, 2000, from which I quote.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas (1980): *Works and Worlds of Art*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Yablo, Stephen (2001): "Go Figure: A Path through Fictionalism", Peter A. French & Howard K. Wettstein, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXV, Oxford: Blackwell, 72-102.

Yablo, Stephen (2014): *Aboutness*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Notes

[1] I borrow this and the other two related labels from Bonomi (2008). Ninan (2017, 69) calls them 'authorial diktats', which is apt for textual discourse, but I prefer Bonomi's package.
[2] See the editors "Introduction" to Brock & Everett (2015) for an excellent summary of further arguments for and against realism, and references.
[3] Voltolini (2006) provides a helpful exploration of the alternatives.

[4] A view like this appears to follow from Ludlow's (2006) main claim, that in fictional contexts predicates such as 'is a vampire' (metonymically?) acquire an extended sense in which they truly, literally apply to the props representing vampires in the relevant fiction, such as actors playing vampire roles in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Ludlow is not fully clear regarding what the props are in literary cases, but if we take them to be the representations to which fictional names refer in metafictional discourse on Walters' realist view presented below, the resulting proposal is a natural extension to textual discourse. (Walters himself nonetheless dismisses it, on the grounds I take it that the pretense view better accounts for our intuitions.) Martinich & Stroll (2007) defend a related view for textual uses, including those of sentences with apparently empty names like (7) – which, unlike in the previous proposal, they take to be in fact empty, without that preventing them from being true. They advance a performative view of the acts of the fiction-maker, which create "institutional facts" making their claims true.

[5] Everett & Schroeder (2015) call such representations *ideas*.

[6] García-Carpintero (2017) provides a recent presentation and further references.

[7] The pretense involved is hence *semantic* – as opposed to *pragmatic* – on Armour-Garb's & Woodbridge's (2014) classification, if I understand it correctly.

[8] This is what happens when the mother tells her child "the cowboy should now wash his hands for dinner"; i.e., it is to make an utterance which would be true-in-the-pretense if certain conditions obtained (mother and child are playing a game of cowboys and Indians, with specific principles of generation), with the intention of asserting such conditions (i.e., that the boy dressed as a cowboy now has certain obligations). Cf. Evans (1982, 363-4).

[9] Hoek (2018, §4) provides a nicely precise, tight variation on these ideas.

[10] There are many nuances that I will be disregarding for my purposes here. For instance, learning does not need to involve coming to believe new truths, but merely coming to be closer to the truth. (Cf. Ichino & Currie (2017) for a helpful discussion.

[11] *Guardian*, 24/2/2009.

[12] Cf. Friend (2017) for critical discussion and an alternative, which she calls *Reality Assumption*: everything that is (really) true is fictionally the case, unless excluded by the work.

[13] Cf. Gaut (2006, 120) on imaginative projects whose goal is "to learn about the world", Langland-Hassan (2016) on "guided chosen" imaginings, Stock (2017, 129) on "counterfactual imagining", and Kind (2018, 229) on "imagining under constraints".

[14] Cf. Graham 2010, for elaboration on a view along those lines, which I take to be meant to apply to the epistemic role of those "flat-out assertions" that Williamson (1996) takes to be indicated by default by the declarative mood.

[15] Dan Kois, "The Academy's Failure to Recognize *Boyhood* Is Their Worst Mistake in 20 Years", The Slate 23/2/2015.

[16] I.e., one about what is possible or necessary.

[17] Cf. also Ichikawa & Jarvis (2009), Green (2017b) and Elgin (2014) on assimilating fictions on this score to thought-experiments; and cp. Egan (2016). Fully-fledged cognitivism is not just the claim that fictions can provide knowledge, but also that this adds to their value. Here I am just concerned with the first side of the view, but note that, in attacking the fully-fledged cognitivism that takes some fictions to provide knowledge along the lines thought-experiments do, Egan makes one of the common mistakes of such critics. The view is not that cognitive pleasures are the only value of fictions. The point is that some fictions make claims along the lines the deployment of thought experiments do, using essentially the same argumentative strategies. They can do this very well, while being objectionable for lacking other aesthetic virtues, or, on the contrary (as in Cortázar's case) by having them in addition. Egan also appeals to the indeterminacy considerations I mention in the main text.

[18] Lewis 1978, 278.

[19] García-Carpintero (forthcoming-a) develops the idea at length; cf. also Reicher, 2012.

[20] Dixon & Bortolussi (2001) offer considerations against this, to which Gerrig & Horton (2001) provide a good rejoinder. Cf. Green (2017b).

[21] Cf. Buchanan (2013) for a good discussion of the relevant indeterminacy, its consequences, and ways of understanding it.

[22] I have discussed elsewhere (García-Carpintero 2016) reasons like this that philosophers like Fricker (2012) use to argue in general that assertions cannot be made indirectly, together with additional reasons based on the need to distinguish lying from misleading (cf. also Marga Reimer's and Jessica Pepp's contributions to this volume).

[23] Cf. Macdonald (1954), Wolterstorff (1980), Currie (1990), Lamarque & Olsen (1994), Stock (2017) and Gaskin (2013), and cp. Searle (1974-5), Walton (1990).

[24] Alston 2000, 48-9; Green 2007, ch. 3.

[25] Walton (1990, 41) characterizes representations as artefacts with the function of *prescribing* imagining.

[26] On constitutive norms accounts of speech acts, cf. Simion & Kelp's contribution to this volume.

[27] García-Carpintero 2004 and forthcoming-c.

[28] *El País*, 5/5/1998.

[29] This is my translation of his own words, "podría llamarse una falsa novela".

[30] "No es un libro autobiográfico ni de memorias, sino una obra de ficción". Confusingly, Marías went on to describe it also as *a narrative book, even if it is a novel that it is not fiction* ("un libro narrativo, aunque sea una novela que no es ficción"). I think he is using here 'fiction' in the sense of *false*, which renders this consistent with his classifying the work as fiction in the quotation in the main text.

[31] "El narrador soy yo con mi nombre y apellido y todo lo que cuento es verdad o son cosas sabidas, conocidas o especuladas por mí". Davies (2007, 32-3) discusses a similar example, Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*, which won the Guardian Fiction Prize 1996 in spite of being commissioned as an autobiography (and published as fiction on Deane's insistence), and the story corresponding "in all significant details to Deane's own childhood". I do not agree with Davies' diagnosis of the case (*op. cit.*, 48) that whether or not the work is correctly classified as fiction depends on whether Deane was following his "fidelity constraint" (more on this below). For all we can tell, both Deane and Marías were following it, but their works are still fictions.

[32] In two of them, an author deliberately reproduces truths but presents them as imagined. In two others, an author unwittingly produces a story that reflects the facts – in one because he doesn't know that his source is reliable, and in another because he has repressed memories of the events he describes – yet intends it to be imagined.

[33] Cf. Livingston 2005, 179; Davies 2007, 44-6.

[34] Friend (2012, 188) appeals to a distinction by Walton. Standard properties are those that tend to qualify a work for membership in a category, contra-standard those that tend to disqualify it for membership, and variable properties are those indifferent for the classification (Walton 1970, 339).

[35] See Stock (2017, 163-7) for related criticisms.