

Renaissance (with *The Tempest*, *La Vida es sueño*, Part II of the *Quijote*) and modernism/postmodernism (with Hesse, Fowles, Borges, Pynchon) — before concluding that neither the role of the "god" as maker of hidden rules nor the reactions of the victim, as "paranoid" thinker, nor yet "the structure of a specific type of illusion" (148) constitute the interest of this type of narrative, but rather the question of "freedom" (150) — that is, of agency — that it poses:

The movement out of a godgame is a movement toward the hidden rules: it entails rational steps, testing, evaluating, constructing hypotheses, rebuilding them after they have crumbled, and always choice, decision, and the exclusion of one alternative in favor of another. The character-player struggles to reconstruct the world in which he is trapped from the exiguous (and normally contradictory) evidence available. (151)

This struggle, which Professor Wilson goes on to describe as a movement through the labyrinth, is that of a subjectivity seeking to grasp the mediations through which the moves that constitute its own search are produced, of an agency defined by the split between will and unconscious, subjection and action; so that the passage furnishes the description of cultural split toward which the whole book, in spite of its apparent favoring of dichotomizing formulations, can be thought to tend.

Always ingeniously argued and engagingly written, often oblique or even playfully wayward — rather than gamely structured? — in its theorizing moves, cheerfully and, it must be admitted, sometimes exasperatingly willing to uphold both sides of some important arguments, this is perhaps not a book for younger players at the game of theorizing. It most certainly is a book to approach with a "lusory attitude" of one's own, a bit warily maybe and conscious that moves are being made in a game whose rules do not preclude feints and the occasional bedazzlement of the reader-adversary, but one which "illudes" as it sometimes eludes and in which the fellow-player that is the reader can quickly become absorbed. Its manifest topic (games and play) is a bamboozling one, that has baffled some of the best brains in the business; and its ultimate subject (something like the nature of culture?) is that of our bamboozlement as cultural subjects. Such a book would surely be a bit implausible, then, if it were not at least somewhat bamboozling in its own right? One is invited here to match wits with a master player, a Palamedes with more than a touch of Odysseus about him; and such an experience is necessarily instructive as well as profoundly pleasurable.

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The Nature and Functioning of Fiction: Some Recent Views

The three studies which are the object of my survey are all concerned in one form or another with the nature of fictions and the fictional.¹ Riffaterre, who requires no introduction to a literary readership, declares quite clearly that his study is "no attempt at a philosophical approach, but [rather] a systematic scrutiny of the textual mechanisms and verbal structures that represent or imply the truth of a fictitious tale" (xii). The other two studies are by professional philosophers and apply the tools of analytical philosophy to the questions of fictionality. Of the two, Walton's is long, complex, dense, often technical and difficult and extremely wide ranging, since his object of study is all the representative arts and one of his main goals is to provide an integrated theory, interrelating the aesthetic with the semantic and ontological dimensions of the institution of fiction. His is a major comprehensive theory of the highest calibre, arguably the most important study in the philosophy of the arts to appear in the United States since Monroe Beardsley's *Aesthetics* (1958). Gregory Currie's book is shorter and less ambitious. He is thoroughly familiar with Walton's work, with which he is in basic agreement, and his object of study is written literary narratives. His goal is also narrower: to provide a rigorous formalised account of the truth conditions for fictional stories and of the factors which influence them. An outline of a theory of our response to fiction constitutes the last chapter of his book. In fact, in most respects Currie's book complements, and sometimes revises slightly, specific points in Walton's magisterial study. In preparing this survey, I had to be highly selective with respect to Walton. I shall accordingly discuss only those parts of his book which either are directly about literary narrative or which contain general claims that are of direct relevance to its understanding. In Currie's case, I have chosen to

1 Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1990. Pp. 450 US\$ 35.00. Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990. Pp. 222 US\$ 39.50. Michael Riffaterre, *Fictional Truth*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1990. Pp. 137 US\$ 9.95.

ignore the formalised machinery, and focus on the substance of his claims. Riffaterre's book bears entirely on literary matters, but here too I felt a need to render the gist of his argument in an idiom free of his dense and highly idiosyncratic semiotic jargon and of his penchant for (pseudo) paradoxes. Finally, I felt that a survey organised according to key issues and drawing on all three studies as required, would be of greater usefulness to the reader than a book by book survey, and this is how I shall proceed.

1. SPEAKING OF WHAT DOES NOT EXIST

One major contemporary approach to the content level of artistic narratives — be they in the form of stories, plays or movies — is represented by fictional worlds semantics. The basic assumption here is that different semiotic structures evoke, create, project or call into existence many fictional worlds which are alternative to the actual one. Such worlds consist of non-actual states of affairs, situations and individuals with their properties and relations. One can refer to the purely fictional individuals inhabiting these worlds by using singular referring expressions such as "Sherlock Holmes," and one can formulate singular propositions about these individuals which are true or false in the given fictional world. In addition, one can formulate general statements about the regularities governing different fictional worlds, as well as (modal) logics for fictional worlds which take into account their ontological differences from the actual one (incompleteness, relative indeterminacy, possible inconsistency). All these operations can be described as embodying the semantics (=theory or truth and reference) of fictional worlds. This way of talking is, however, totally unacceptable to many analytic philosophers who steadfastly advocate a strict one world ontology. According to them, there is only one single world, the actual one. Singular expressions which do not pick up an actual world entity do not refer to anything. Singular propositions containing such non-referring expressions cannot be true or false, since the truth and falsehood of propositions consists in correspondence or non-correspondence to actual states of affairs. We can neither make assertions (=claim that something is true) nor hold beliefs about what does not exist. Consequently, a special logic or semantics of fiction is an essentially senseless project. And yet, many millions of readers and many thousands of critics do talk about Holmes and Beowulf, Narnia and Camelot, and we all feel that some of the claims they make about them are true while others are not. How can this be according to the one world philosophers? Could all this talk be nothing but collective self-deluded gibberish? Such a radical conclusion is highly counter-intuitive and philosophically so reductive that only the logical positivists of yesteryear would rush to embrace it. Is there, then, any way of holding on to the one world ontology while at the same time saving and making sense of our

ordinary readerly and critical practice? Doing precisely this is one of the main thrusts of Walton's work.

According to Walton, our understanding of the nature of fictionality requires a radical reorientation from the semantic to the *pragmatic*. In fact, much of his book, especially part four, consists of an unremitting recasting of the whole semantic idiom usually employed in dealing with artistic objects, and of its implied ontological commitments, into a pragmatic one, coupled with a sharp separation between what happens in stories and how we relate to them and what happens in the actual world and how we behave in it. Walton's approach is functional, rather than substantive or formal, institutional and appreciator- (=reader) oriented. To him, fiction consists not in any special non-existent worlds and entities, but in a special way in which ordinary readers and spectators cognitively and emotionally process, respond to or use such actual world items as texts, films, stage performances and paintings. More specifically, fiction(ality) is seen to reside in a deliberate, socially shared and sanctioned complex practice centered around acts of imagining, pretending or *making-believe*. When we read the text of a novel and, based on it, speak of Anna Karenina and claim that she had an unhappy marriage, we are engaged in a game of make-believe (GMB) for which the words of the text serve as a prop. What we are actually doing is pretending to be referring to and to be making assertions about actual world individuals and situations. Within the confines of the *Anna Karenina*-based pretend game it is authorised (acceptable, legitimate, appropriate, warranted) to formulate such propositions and to accept some while rejecting others (for example, that Anna was old and ugly). Obviously, there are constitutive conventions establishing the very playing of such an elaborate game, in which many readers and critics have participated over a long time. Such conventions can be collectively labelled "the fictive stance," a term coined by Peter Lamarque. Narrative texts classified as "fiction" in our libraries or bookstores are those actual world texts whose primary or standard social function in our time and culture is to serve as props in GMBs, hence to prompt, mandate or prescribe the imagining of certain propositions, such as that in London there lived a great detective named "Holmes" and that he did such and so. Calling a text "a work of fiction" is hence equivalent to a pragmatic rule, telling us what we are to do with it and how it should function in our lives.

The totality of the singular and quantified propositions that can legitimately be imagined as true in a GMB based on a given text, or as appropriate to it, defines the work-world. But this is not a world in any ontological sense whatsoever. Now some of these imagined propositions may turn out to be true outside the game as well, that is, in the actual world, for example, if they concern a historical figure. But such truth is neither implied

nor negated by the status of these claims in the game and is totally irrelevant to the game itself. For a GMB only one distinction is relevant, that between what is true or warranted in the game and what is not. Truth in a game is not itself a special kind of truth but simply a term indicating that such and such may legitimately be made-believe in a game based on a particular text. Works whose primary social function is to serve as props in GMBs may be used in other ways as well, as we shall see later on. But one cannot claim to have understood, received or appreciated them adequately until and unless one engages in the corresponding imagining game. So far we have spoken of the story-oriented propositions one is enjoined to imagine when playing a literary GMB. But the reader's role extends well beyond this intellectual appreciation. When we pretend to believe, in an *Anna Karenina*-based game, that there was a woman called Anna Karenina and that she suffered greatly, then not only the belief content, but our act of believing itself is fictional, hence part of the game. When we read a literary narrative text belonging to the text-type biography, for example, we also pretend, or "make it true of ourselves" as Walton says, that we ourselves are currently engaged in reading an account of true facts. When we watch two actors on the stage in a performance of *Hamlet*, we not only make believe that the two actors are, say, Hamlet and Polonius, but also make-believe that we ourselves are currently watching the confrontation between them. In addition, we make it true of ourselves in a GMB that we are concerned about the heroine's fate, that we sympathise with her plight and hope that she would survive. In a word, we make certain make-believe gestures concerning our own cognitive and emotive states, we imagine things about ourselves as active participants in the game. The totality of propositions we imagine from the inside as true of ourselves as participants in the game defines our game-world, a phrase again devoid of any ontological commitment. In Walton's terms we may say that as participants we serve as reflexive props in GMBs. According to Currie, make-believe involves a propositional operator, indicating what is true in a game triggered by the work, as well as the propositional attitude we adopt towards what is true in the story when we are playing the game. Work-world and corresponding game-world or appreciator's-world are two sides of the same coin, since props function only in a social or at least human set-up. But the extent of the reader's possible participation depends on the structure of the prop (text) itself, a point we shall discuss in section three.

2. WHEN IS SOMETHING A PROP?

In principle, any text could serve as prop in someone's GMB. But normally, according to Walton, a text will have this function in a community if there is a tradition, convention or meta-rule in this community according to which

things of this kind are typically meant to serve this purpose (52). Functions are cultural constraints, and nothing therefore has any function independent of a social context. With a change in context, a text may acquire or lose its make-believe function. What is more, a text may have several functions concurrently, make-believe being only one of them. A change in the receiving context may also bring about a rehierarchisation of these functions. Does it matter how the creator of a text intended it to be used? Walton tends towards a negative answer, stressing the primacy of the community of users and its conventions, since for him, the appreciator-prop relation defines the institution of fiction. Currie is of a different opinion. To him the production of any text is a communicative act in which the sender's pragmatic intentions as to the attitude the receiver should adopt towards this text are of paramount importance. For him, a text is fiction or prop in a GMB only if its author's communicative intent was fictive, that is, that the reader should make-believe, rather than believe, that the story as uttered is true. Fictive intents on the part of authors lead to fictive utterances which, in their turn, lead to fictional works (35). Cases exist though where we do not know what the author's intentions were, and a tradition has been established of receiving the text as fiction. Should we discover one day that the author did not intend his text to function as fiction, we will probably not desist from our practice, but technically the text would from then on be only a pseudofiction. I have earlier quoted Walton as saying that a text serves as fiction in a community if there is a tradition or convention in it of treating things of its kind as props. How does this kind then manifest itself? This is the traditional question about the indicators of fictionality, now reinterpreted as textual features whose conventional role is to serve as instructions or guidelines for the make-believe use of the text in which they occur. Riffaterre is very helpful in this context, citing under the heading "Fictionality Declared" a long list of such features, ranging from paratextual indicators (preface and postface), via disclaimers of factual truth to generic features in titles and sub-titles, formulaic openings, plurality of narrating voices or positions, intra-textual glosses on terms included in the text itself, omniscience claims of the global speaking voice, incompatibility between what is seen and the speaking voice reporting about it, and excess of detail. All of these are indications that the text was explicitly designed by its creator to invoke in the reader conventions of response which involve treating this text as a prop in a GMB.

3. INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE GMB

One can distinguish four ways in which texts whose main cultural role is to serve as props in GMBs are processed in a literary or aesthetic context: full participation, appreciation without participation, looking in or commenting

on the game from the outside, and dealing with the text as pure prop, outside any game activity. Walton mentions all four possibilities, but discusses in detail only the first two. Full participation, or full fledged GMB, is the usual mode of reception of literary texts by ordinary, "naive" readers, as well as by literary critics who offer readings or interpretations of these texts, e.g., A.C. Bradley on *Hamlet*. The reader or critic loses himself in the story, is caught up or absorbed in it, pretending to speak of Emma and Charles Bovary as if they were real people, analysing their situation and making-believe that he is concerned about them, that he sympathises with or despises them and the like. This game centrally involves fleshing in and filling out, that is, the formulation of many fictional truths or propositions concerning the work-world which are neither explicitly formulated in the text nor logically entailed or implied by the sentences of the text, an activity not unlike Ingarden's concretisation, which we discuss in section four. Texts whose structure enables or encourages such participation function first and foremost as generators of singular fictional truths in the GMBs associated with them, and concomitantly as the generators of rich and vivid imaginings and emotions by the reader. Some texts, however, are structured in ways which limit or inhibit the generation of fictional truths in their work-worlds, as well as the scope and intensity of the reader's corresponding intellectual and emotive participation. In the literary theory and practice of the modern age, such procedures are variously referred to as romantic irony, involvement and detachment, breaking the illusion, laying bare the device, playing with the medium or focussing on the message as such, and are blatantly manifest in post modernism and meta-fiction. But while to the Russian Formalists these procedures constituted the very essence of art, Walton insists on the essentially representative or mimetic nature of literary narrative, theatre and painting, treating Cubism and illusion breaking devices in the theatre and literature as a special strand or sub-category. Some works discourage participation by displaying their fictionality, thereby preventing us from imagining vividly that we are being told truths about actual individuals and events. In other words, we are constantly aware that this is just a story, not a true report. Other works do the same by foregrounding the medium of the work itself: its physical shape and the process by which it is made, rather than its role in generating fictional truths. Such procedures are termed by Walton "reflexive," since they have themselves and the props in which they occur as their object, and generate fictional truths about themselves. This of course is the self-referring mechanism so prevalent in the *nouveau roman* for example. Vividness of representation can also be reduced by embedding a work-world in a frame, be it pictorial or narrative, which is concerned with the very process of inventing this work-world. A good example is *Vanity Fair*, in which the story of Becky Sharp and her friend is told inside a frame which

calls attention to the very process of inventing and narrating this story. In this case, Walton claims, we stand apart from the embedded "fictional world" and merely observe it through the frame, since what is being represented is a representation, not a "life story." While we cannot be fully caught up in a story in all of these cases, they are still part and parcel of the general activity of making-believe or imagining. Our stance is now indeed primarily that of onlookers, with emotional participation severely curtailed. But what we observe or contemplate intellectually as we stand back is the kind(s) of game that could/might be played with the prop in front of us. We may also delight in the devices by which participation is inhibited (Brecht's V-Effekt), or focus our attention on the relation between the work's physical properties, such as graphic shape and sound in literature, and their possible role in make-believe. Or we may just consider the nature of the very narrative techniques which inhibit or encourage our participatory games. Finally, no breaking of the illusion is ever sustained throughout the text, so we may ultimately be said to be alternately participating in all such cases in two different games on two different levels: one in which we read the storyteller's text as verbal artefact and one in which the work-world it generates is seen as a record of actual events.

In the third case, readers function as onlookers from the outside, who study the prop (text), the fictional truths it implies, and the principles of generation of such truths in operation. In other words, we analyse and explain the game. Such is the stance of literary theorists who stand apart from the game and try to explain what makes it work. One can discuss here the various kinds of games which are being played or which could be played with a given prop and correlate them with textual features, without oneself engaging in any particular game. What one does here is hence calling attention to and speaking of a pretence, without instantiating it. Notice that the various actual or potential games themselves are actual world cultural phenomena, unlike the work-world which is the object of the game. If children pretend in a game that stumps are bears, then this pretence and their attendant behaviour are real facts which can be studied by child psychologists, while the imagined bears and the fear of them the children experience in the game are not. Similarly, the different readings of Hamlet's personality given by different readers and critics are facts of cultural history, while Hamlet and his family problems are not. When we say "in the novel X, p happens" or "Y, a character in novel X, does so and so," we allude to a pretence or speak about it, and may even argue that what we said is warranted within the GMB associated with this text; but we are not ourselves engaging in any pretence. Walton calls such warning signals "devices of disavowal and betrayal." In a broader sense, any text which is a meta-interpretation or a meta-reading of a work of literature, such as a comparison or analysis of the claims made by different critics on what

happens in *Hamlet*, is of this kind as well. Empirically oriented reader response criticism is by and large of this kind too, since one of its main interests is the study of the GMBs "naive" readers play with texts and the factors influencing their specific nature and content. Finally, we may desist altogether from looking for a figure of any kind in the carpet and deal with just the carpet. One can accordingly analyse features of the prop as such, as when art historians focus exclusively on brush strokes, use of colours, surfaces and shapes when they confront a landscape painting or a portrait. One deals here with the actual world object as an artefact, without either engaging in or referring to a pretence of any kind. In literary studies, this purely actualist stance covers textology, linguistic and stylistic analysis, the study of themes and motives as semantic complexes, of topoi, compositional patterns and intertextual relations in terms of sources, borrowing, quotation, allusion, stylisation and the like. One would study here methods of portrayal, but not what is being portrayed. Once again, the way the Russian Formalists isolated and catalogued artistic procedures and then inserted them into the dynamics of the literary institution is exemplary. Wishing to be scientific, they could not admit the fictional stance into the science of literature. A character, such as the Byronic hero, is accordingly seen as a system of descriptive clichés put together from various textual sources, and not as a suffering grandiose or pathetic person.

4. WHAT IS TRUE IN THE WORK-WORLD?

A work-world or story world is associated with, in fact defined by the collection of singular and quantified propositions whose imagining is authorised in a GMB based on this work. Or, in Currie's terms, precisely those propositions are fictionally true which form part of the story. The content of these authorised propositions is jointly determined by features of the text itself (the sentences of which it is made) and by rules of generation — named background assumptions by Currie — applied to the text. We are now clearly in the area referred to in literary studies as interpretation. Some basic observations are as follows: textual features, as well as rules of generation are part of a social context. Interpretation is hence an inter-subjective, rule governed and constrained process as well as product. Not all relevant textual features and of course not all implications will be noticed in any one reading or game, hence plenitude of sense and openness to more readings. Different principles of generation can be applied to the same text on different readings, yielding somewhat different sets of fictional truths in each case, hence plurality and historical variability of GMBs which can be played with the same text. In each GMB, the fictional truths generated are not a collection of independent claims, but form a complex of mutually supporting claims, hence holism of confirmation, where each

singular proposition is corroborated only within a system of claims. Accordingly, interpretation is a back and forth movement until an overall fit among fictional truths is achieved. Finally, it is sometimes, but not always, possible to provide non-equivalent but equally good interpretations of the same text, hence occasional undecidability between them.

In principle, one can distinguish between directly generated or primary fictional truths and indirectly generated or implied ones. Propositions of the first kind are made fictional by the words of the text alone, while those of the second kind are made to hold on the basis of a core of primary truths plus principles of implication. It is evident that, for any narrative, there are many more implied than primary propositions and that, on occasion, some of the most central fictional truths in a story may be only indirectly generated or implied. What principles of generation enable the inference from primary to implied truths or, in more general terms, enable us to supplement and expand the limited textual information, filling blanks and gaps in it? Walton warns us that such principles of generation are numerous, diverse in nature, and seldom explicitly formulated by readers or critics. One cannot provide a roster of rules or a discovery procedure for fictional truths beyond saying that a rule of generation is any convention stating that whenever such and such is fictionally true, so and so is true as well. Two major principles of implication which have been explicitly formulated and discussed by philosophers are the reality and the mutual belief principles, which are analysed by both Walton and Currie on the basis of David K. Lewis's classic "Truth in fiction" (Collected Papers, Volume one). Quite simply put, the reality principle allows or even requires us to accept as true in a work-world any proposition which is true in the actual world, until and unless such a proposition is blocked or negated or defeated by one or more primary fictional truths. In other words, we are to take any work-world to be as similar or close to the actual world as its core of primary truths allows. This default principle has been dubbed by David Lewis "the principle of minimal departure" (from the actual world). It means that if Napoleon or London in 1810 are mentioned in the story, we may transfer into the story whatever is true of them. The same goes for general assumptions about man and nature. If a human being is mentioned, then whatever is true of human beings in general is fictionally true of this individual. And the same goes for any inference from one event to another, from behaviour to the psychology of the agent and the like. If indeed we pretend to read stories as if they were tellings of known facts, such an assumption makes perfect sense. Now what we know and believe about reality varies drastically in time and space. We realize instinctively that it would be grossly inadequate to read medieval narratives about witches, ghosts and unicorns in light of our own model of reality, treating as mad, superstitious or grossly mistaken the narrator and characters who believe in them. The reality principle should hence be

replaced by the mutual belief principle, which states that we ought to accept as true in the work-world any proposition which was mutually believed by artist and readers in the artist's society (again unless blocked by primary truths). Dante's geography, history and physics, rather than our own, should hence be the relevant factors in filling in information gaps in the *Divine Comedy*. This is known in literary contexts as the principle of the historical cultural relativism of interpretation, requiring the reconstruction of such complex cultural entities as the Elizabethan world picture or the medieval mind, and the fusion of our horizon with the author's. Walton notes that it is quite difficult for us to put ourselves in the shoes of members of another cultural community when playing a GMB, as distinct from doing historical research, because it requires that we make it true of ourselves that we are, say, sixteenth century Englishmen, thereby bracketing out most of our knowledge and beliefs, and reducing both vividness and richness of our participation. Analogously, while we are to accept in the game propositions which cannot be true in the actual world, such as that people can turn into animals, it is most difficult for us to accept moral judgements which are contrary to our own, even if they are presented as primary truths in the work's world, say a racist or Nazi novel. There are in addition restrictions on the applicability of both principles in artistic contexts. Under "Silly Questions" Walton notes that some questions and implications justified by either principle must be suppressed or disregarded for the good of the game as a whole. For example, how come a Moorish officer speaks in elaborate English verse, or why does Lear not recognise Gloucester? The explanation of such anomalies, as we know already from Tynjanov's work in the twenties, is to be found in the artistic needs and purposes of the real author *vis-à-vis* the reader. Similarly, inconsistent strands in a narrative or inconsistent implications are not to be jointly asserted, lest the story as a whole turn into a contradiction from which anything follows. We are also in no hurry to import into a story we read the enormous number of actual world truths we are allowed to bring in by the reality or mutual belief principles. In point of fact, we import selectively according to an informal principle of relevance, bringing in only that which the work-world is based upon, alludes to or requires to facilitate comprehension and prevent misunderstanding. On the other hand, we often accept in a GMB fictional truths which are generated not by the reality or mutual belief principles, but by generic conventions and traditions, formal features, intertextual transfer and the like — all belonging not to the make-believe world but to the real author's craft and artifice.

One difficulty remains unresolved in Walton's comprehensive presentation. Occasionally, propositions which are true in a work-world do not correspond to, or even contradict the propositions literally expressed by sentences in the text. Walton apparently has in mind not the utterances of

deceitful or mistaken characters in the narrative, but rather the global narrative voice when it turns out to be unreliable as regards fact or judgement, inconsistent or speaking in an ironic or metaphorical mode. How then do we recognise unreliability and irony in a global narrator's discourse and how do we go on from such recognition to elicit those propositions which are true in the work-world? This difficult problem, which Walton leaves unanswered, leads Currie to the categorical statement that "without prior assumptions about the fictional author we cannot start to interpret the text" (78), and leads us to a discussion of narrators and implied authors and their role in GMBs played with literary narratives. On this issue, major differences between Walton and Currie become evident.

5. NARRATORS, IMPLIED AND FICTIONAL AUTHORS

The GMBs we are playing with literary narrative texts involve a double pretence: that certain actions, situations and events took place and that when reading the text we are hearing or reading someone's report of these events, this someone telling of the events as known facts. We are thus imagining at least two individuals: the one who did thus and so and the other who tells of the adventures of the first by producing this report (Currie 154). Our pretence is that the actual words of the text, written by the real author, represent words used by someone else in a report. This someone else who fictionally speaks or writes is the narrator. And if it is fictionally true that there is someone speaking, it is also fictionally true of ourselves in the game that we are hearing or overhearing, reading or overreading him/her. The teller and the told alike are make-believe and constitute a pair of correlative pretences. Walton says: "perhaps the fact that fictionally the narrator speaks or writes the words of the text is a primary fictional truth, one that depends on no others. It may even be the only one; all other fictional truths the work generates may flow from it" (372-73). Why do we imagine a teller for every narrative text we read, even if his/her presence is not textually explicit (marked)? First of all, for all declarative sentences in actual life we assume a reporter; and since we pretend that we are reading an actual report of actual events, this is only natural. Secondly, most fictional reports contain indications of the speaker's attitude to the told, attitudes we cannot attribute to the real author who is outside the GMB; so a fictional narrator is our natural choice. Two more ingenious reasons provided by Currie have to do with the uniqueness conditions of the told. Imagine two authors creating independently the same narrative text word for word. The two texts as actual world objects can be individuated by their different causal origins. But how do we individuate the fictional reports and their objects within the GMB? This can be effected by pretending that there are two different narrators, each responsible for one of these reports.

There can be two identical fictional reports, but there can be only one unique fictional narrator responsible for this very make-believe report, a copy of which I pretend to be reading in my current GMB with the actual text. In each GMB with a narrative text we pretend that we are witnessing a current act of reporting: acts are unique, and each such act can be ascribed to one speaker/writer only. Similarly, suppose a fictional report containing only indefinite references: "a bird flew, a man passed by, a cat was prowling." The uniqueness of these objects can be secured only by pretending that there is an individual who has a particular man, bird or cat in mind (Currie 152-58). The fictional narrator may lead though to conflicts with the reality or mutual belief principles. If omniscient, how does he know what happened when nobody was there? And if fallible and of limited knowledge, like ourselves, why should we believe everything he/she reports? Once again, these are "silly questions" which can be answered only by shifting our grounds to an examination of the artistic conventions underlying the text and to the reader's need for information about the told.

Walton further distinguishes two kinds of narrators: reporters and story-tellers. The first speak or write non-fictionally within the game, the pretence being that they are reporting actual events. The second kind speak or write fictionally within the game, the pretence being that they speak or write to create a story, as in Robert Coover's "The Magic Poker": "I wander the island, inventing it." The only action reported by the narrator as fact in the primary work-world or the told is the narrator's very activity of writing, inventing or creating the text of a story. The actual text may obviously contain parts of this invented story with its own told. Put another way, the actual text consists of two levels or work-worlds. In the first order, embedding work-world, there is a narrator who writes the text of a story in which X kills Y. In the second order embedded world, there are X and Y themselves. Sometimes we may be interested in something else, namely, the impression the literary text itself creates of the kind of person who wrote it. We thus speak of "de Sade's" utter cynicism, "Tolstoy's" keen observation of human psychology and the like. On the basis of the text we thus imagine someone of that sort writing it thus. This imagined individual is by definition a story-telling narrator (370). With this simple, elegant definition Walton characterises the "implied author" we speak of when we have in mind a real author's creative personality, the "Shakespeare, his world view and values" we construct on the basis of the plays. For Walton, this individual is still part of a GMB, of games we play with fictional texts, and need not correspond to anything in the actual world. Currie, on the other hand, uses "fictional author" in a bewildering variety of ways. Sometimes it functions as an equivalent to Walton's narrator, be s/he textually marked or not. On other occasions it seems to be very similar to Walton's implied author, as when Currie says that the style of the text is crucial in creating the image of

its fictional author, his beliefs and attitudes. "Henry James' convoluted style is an important clue to the fictional author's belief in the endless complexity of human motivation" (123). On still other occasions the fictional author is simply a metaphor for the mutual belief principle, it being assumed that he belongs to the same period and place as the text itself (78). Finally, the fictional author sometimes seems extremely similar to Wayne Booth's implied author, the one who stands above or beyond the textually inscribed narrator and who serves as both origin and yardstick for whatever is to be believed true in the fiction. And this, as we know, may be very different from what the narrator claims. The elusive fictional author is also both source and indicator of what statements by the narrator are to be taken as true in the fiction and which not because of irony, metaphorical usage and the like. I find all this to be very confusing and unhelpful. For example, how could the fictional author, who is inferred from the text, serve as yardstick of what is true in the work-world, when the problem is created in the first place by the text's being ambiguous or inconsistent on this very point? I also feel that the conflation of the various senses of "fictional author" stems at least in part from Currie's total failure to take into account any work in narratology.

6. CHARACTERS AND THEIR NAMES

In playing GMBs with literary narratives, we pretend to learn about real people and their life careers. But Currie and Walton alike do not want to admit non-existent individuals into their theories of fiction(ality). So, how do the proper names of fictional characters function inside the narrative text if they do not refer to anything, and what are we as readers and critics really doing when we speak about the life careers of literary characters or compare them inter-textually? Currie provides a comprehensive formalised theory with a semantic bias on these issues, and this theory is no doubt the best and most original part of his study. Walton, on the other hand, seeks to prove that readerly statements including an apparent reference to non-existents can be explicated by or reformulated into statements which do not imply such reference. According to both, GMBs are by and large bound to individual texts which authorise them, while intertextual comparisons involve "unofficial games" with unclear rules of implication and are secondary and tenuous, if not outright suspect. According to Currie, fictional proper names, that is, those which do not pick out any existing persons, are used by authors and function within narrative texts as bound variables. To understand a story about "Sherlock Holmes" I do not need to pick out any particular individual to whom "Holmes" refers; I just have to assume that there is someone who does whatever it is said that Holmes did in the story, that is, assume a purely qualitative world. The name "Holmes" functions in the text like an *x*, to which a series of predicates is attached in the course of the story. If I read

in the text that Holmes did thus and so, I need only make believe that there was someone who was called "Holmes" and who did thus and so, without needing to have any particular individual in mind. "Meaningfulness without reference is all that is required so we can make-believe the story is true" (150). Walton's explication is entirely within the pragmatics of make-believe whereby we only pretend to refer and assert in such cases. To say that "Tom Sawyer attended his own funeral" is in fact to say that the novel *Tom Sawyer* is such that to engage in an act of pretence represented by the above sentence while participating in a game authorised by the text is acceptable or appropriate, and that is all there is to it.

Fictional names can also be used meta-fictionally by readers, especially after they have finished reading the text. When we speak about fictional characters, Currie argues, names such as "Holmes" and "Watson" function as complex abbreviated descriptions of whatever these two are and do in the story, the names occurring within the scope of the operator "in the fiction/story/work." Fictional characters are carved out of the stories which enfold them and — within our actual world discourse — are synonymous with the abbreviated description of everything they were and did in that story. It is therefore meaningless for us to say "Holmes might have been or done otherwise than is described in the story." We may also use fictional names not within the fiction and not within the "in the story" operator, but when we compare characters across fictions ("interfictional carry over") or with actual individuals, or when we seek to reidentify the "same" fictional character across fictions. All these varieties fall under the trans-fictional use. Walton notices that while none of these games is official or authorised by individual texts, these games may nevertheless be seen as inspired by the official ones and as consisting of their modification. In the trans-fictional mode, Currie says, fictional names are equivalent to being such and such, that is, a role or office. To say that Holmes is more interesting than Poirot is to say that the Holmes role, that is, having such and such properties, abilities, dispositions, and the like, is richer and more interesting than having the Poirot role, similarly defined. And the same goes for a comparison between Holmes and an actual detective. How about such cases as comparing Homer's and Tennyson's Ulysses? If the later work is a consistent expansion of the earlier one and accepts as true in the game whatever is true of Ulysses in the earlier one, then the new Ulysses role is a mere extension of the old one in Currie's view. Walton, who does not use the role concept, is inclined to a paraphrase that is outside any make-believe activity. Comparing the two, he claims, is tantamount to arguing that because of the genetic relation between the two texts, one should keep in mind aspects of the *Odyssey* and its authorised games when dealing with the Tennyson poem (416). Sometimes, however, it looks like different stories contradict each

other as regards some of the activities of a single character identified by the same proper name or, as literary critics say, the stories provide different versions of the same individual's career and properties. One is thus tempted to look for a common core of properties shared by all of them, and regard the rest as varieties around it. But Currie is most emphatically negative on this point. Since fictional individuals are defined by the totality of their properties or their role as defined in each text, and since they have no independent existence outside particular work-worlds attached to specific texts, roles which are inconsistent with each other can be compared, but not fused together. If the roles associated with the same proper name in different texts are incompatible, one should not speak in such cases of "the same character" occurring in the different stories. As readers, we may engage in a game in which the earlier text is a mistaken biography of a named individual, while the later text is the correct one of the same individual. But when it comes to sober philosophical analysis of truth conditions in fiction, such games are not acceptable. On the other hand, if the named individual is a real historical person, such games are of course perfectly admissible.

7. REINFORCING THE PRETENCE

Central to the reader's make-believe activity when reading a narrative text is the formulation of singular propositions concerning the actions of fictional individuals and the events in which they are involved. The formulation and acceptance of such propositions or fictional truths relies entirely on the text itself and not on any actual world states of affairs. It is therefore important to single out those textual lexical mechanisms which induce the reader to hold as true in the game such narrative propositions or, in other words, to single out the textual devices or procedures of narrative self-authentication. Riffaterre's study is devoted almost entirely to a close scrutiny of those non-narrative, especially descriptive, devices which are "truth creating" (53), giving fictional narratives a ring of truth or verisimilitude, that is, lending support, credibility and "proof" to narrative propositions, whether they are formulated in the text itself (primary) or by the reader (secondary, implied). Riffaterre distinguishes and, in the excellent glossary, defines four groups of authenticating textual devices: those which are part of the physical narrated world; those which belong to the activity of narration; those which function as meta-narrative thematic comments, and those which are animated by intertextual echoes. To each group of devices, one chapter is devoted in this order.

The first group consists of cultural clichés and of derivations from a "given" or a "matrix." Descriptions utilising cultural clichés and stereotypes involve ready made descriptive models that reflect a group's idea or consensus about some aspect of reality, much like the frames or scripts of

standardised world knowledge in cognitive psychology. The truthfulness of the told, its verisimilitude, is reinforced by recourse to such descriptive systems which are taken as true by definition. Derivation or expansion means essentially seizing upon a denoting term such as "a provincial town" or "a very ugly country" (17), and expanding in the course of the text on its various components, so that gradually a whole descriptive system is engendered. In linguistic terms this means that a key lexeme or word (the given, or matrix) serves as a point of departure or as centre for the development of a whole lexical field or network, whose different components (words, phrases, sentences) are nothing but expansions of the semantic features of the original key word. For "a provincial town," such expansions may include "ugly," "conservative," "moving slowly," "lacking in recent news," "having no paved streets," and the like. The key word can in fact be likened to a paragraph heading, with the expansions being the details falling under it. Since all the expansions are already contained in the key word, we are witnessing here a process of semantic saturation via metonymic reiteration. And, since the various expanding expressions are scattered throughout the text, they form in retrospect a paradigm class, where the occurrence of a later element calls to mind all the previous ones, and where the various expressions or substitutions reinforce each other and the key word. The narrative claim that a provincial town is thus and so is accordingly reinforced by a strictly linguistic mechanism. Ultimately, tautology or self-confirmation is the rule here: it was a provincial town because it was slow, with unpaved streets and the rest, and the streets were unpaved because it was a provincial town.

Elements which belong markedly to the narration and indicate the narrator's hand reveal or declare the text as fictional. And yet, paradoxically, they often serve to enhance the GMB, probably by enhancing the total information content. Such elements include emblematic names (Dickens's Mr. Merdle) and any interposition of the narrator's consciousness, such as omniscience, humour, comment and explanation of what is happening, filling in information not accessible to the characters, and the description in metaphorical terms of physical objects in the characters' milieu. But physical objects in the characters' milieu may also acquire a wide symbolic significance, forming as it were a microcosmic representation of the dynamics of the action as a whole, as well as of its general ideological or psychological thematic significance. Small physical details may thus stand for a central theme of the narrative as a whole. Two examples cited and analysed by Riffaterre are the purchase, breaking and reassembly of the golden bowl in Henry James' novel (= fidelity in marriage) and the collar studs in Dr. Aziz's shirt in *A Passage to India* (= unavoidable cultural misunderstandings). Following Riffaterre, the textual passages in which these physical work-world

objects function as symbols are separate from the literal narrative, forming an undercurrent which runs parallel to the main narrative flow, or pockets of interspersed comments on the narrative. Such passages, which serve as global hermeneutic models for the action, and which facilitate the reader's understanding, may be concerned not just with abstract themes (what the story as a whole is "about," what is its point), but also with the overall course of action or with aspects of plot and character. The literal truth of the tale must be presupposed for the physical objects to be able to function as symbols, so that such symbols by necessity reinforce the fictional reality upon which they gloss. Notice that, for the characters involved, the objects may look trivial and insignificant and their symbolic dimension is there for narrator and reader who observe the course of events globally, that is, a-temporally or retrospectively. Finally, both the descriptive systems engendered by the expansion mechanism and the passages in which physical objects function as narrative or thematic symbols may be the product of an intertextual import with possible modifications. Calling to mind the pertinent part of the original text, the system of objects described in it, and the way in which they are described, such intertextual associations help strengthen the richness, vividness and verisimilitude of the importing narrative. This is especially true when the borrowing occurs within the same author's oeuvre, as Riffaterre's example from Hugo clearly demonstrates. It is regrettable though that Riffaterre draws all his examples from broadly realistic narrative, where verisimilitude could, at least in part, be established by correspondence to actual world individual facts and typological regularities. It would be more interesting to examine the working of the mechanisms he has so well portrayed in clearly non-realistic narrative, from medieval romance to the fantastic tale of Romanticism.

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