FICTION AND THE ONTOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE*

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I

Towards the end of the XVIIIth century, a new cosmology was quite established in the European scientific milieux and was constantly conquering new social territories. Earlier, Fontenelle described the pleasure and amazement with which a narrow French elite came in touch with the recent astronomy. The Christian cosmology was far from dead, however. At the very end of the century, the enormous success of Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation*, an enthusiastic, open celebration of the old cosmology, cannot be attributed only to the beauty of the music. Indeed, in defiance of the musical conventions of the period, *The Creation* relates the music to the libretto in an almost literal way. Should one think that the public was enjoying the oratorio despite its cosmology or because of it? At least some of the contemporary admirers of Haydn must have heard of the new theories about the planets moving around the sun. They must have been peripherally aware of a certain cosmology, while keeping their central commitments to an entirely different one, similar to a child who at the age when it becomes more and more obvious that Santa Claus doesn't exist, still clings to his old beliefs, while marginally sensing that his convictions may be obsolete.

Would thus the utter enjoyment of Haydn's *Creation*, libretto included, ¹ represent a case of playful ontological regression? Could it be that, conversely, in other cases artistic fiction conveys ontological anticipation? Think of the godless world of some of Marlowe's plays, or of the attributeless characters of Musil.

It is clear from such examples that the referential framework posited by literary or more generally by artistic fiction does

not necessarily function by virtue of the ontological structure attributed to the actual world. On the contrary, in many cases, the ontology of fiction enters into complex conflictual relationships with actual ontologies. Our questions will be: how should we understand such conflicts? how are they solved? what are the consequences of these conflicts and their solutions for literary theory?

II

Usually, in the philosophical environment where discussions about *what there is* take place, the participants are crucially interested in eliminating superfluous entities and in working with only one type of beings, the *basic* beings.[2] This remark applies to the realist philosopher as well as to the instrumentalist, to the hardcore actualist, as well as to the proponent of possible-worlds semantics. For, indeed, instrumentalism is an epistemological attitude, casting little doubt about the ontological properties of things out there, questioning only our ability to grasp them realistically. As for the possible-worlds semanticist, his endeavor aims precisely at dispensing with the ontologically troublesome possible beings, which conveniently become actual-in—some-possible world.

One attempt to break with this «reality fixation,» as Richard Routley appropriately calls it, is provided by Meinongian ontology.[3] To every description there corresponds a being; some of these possess actual existence, while others, lacking actuality, subsist only. For the theory of fiction, the Meinongian point of view is most welcome. It accounts for a central intuition shared by users of natural language and fiction, namely that when we speak about some entity, we posit it as hypothetically being there in some ontological space, the nature of which remains to be determined from case to case. «The best hockey player in the world,» «the longest sentence in English,» «the present king of France,» «the square circle,» «God»-each of these expressions posits a being, whose actual existence may be checked later on, but whose subsistence in some kind of space we take for granted as soon as the expression is uttered and understood. In a Meinongian framework one may devise a metrics for measuring in each case the distance between actuality and the subsisting being, and elaborate about the nature of the subsistence-space of each expression. Thus, «the longest sentence in English» belongs to the non-actual physically impossible world where humans would live eternally and utter infinite sentences;

«the square circle» subsists in the non-actual logically impossible world where the entities can possess contradictory properties, and so on.

Still, from the point of view of the theory of fiction, a Meinongian model does not go beyond a division of beings into two categories: actual and non-actual. In earlier papers, I have argued that in order to understand reference to mythological and fictional beings, ontologies making use of only one realm of actual entities are not sufficient.' In addition to mono-level ontologies, we may construct multi-level ontologies, describing worlds which include two or more layers of actual beings. Such an ontology, I have contended, is necessary for the representation of worlds pervaded by the sacred. As described by phenomenologists and historians of religion, these worlds share a clear-cut distinction between the realm of the sacred and the realm of the profane. In what follows, I shall elaborate on multi-level ontologies by examining the perculiarities of reference to such worlds. I will then discuss the use of ontologies within human communities, ontological fermentation and development, decomposition and clashes, solutions such as cultural landscaping, reactions. Finally, I will examine the role of fictional ontologies within the ontological economy of a given culture.

During the initiation ceremonies, the Kwakiutl neophyte describes the pole in the center of the worship house as follows: «I am in the Center of the World....I am next to the Pillar of the World.» The novice is not making the same type of attribution as a speaker who, speaking about Paris, describes it as «the capital of France.» The pole in the worship house it not a mere object fulfilling the function of «pillar of the World,» the way Paris plays the function of capital of France. Think instead of a Frenchman who, after Napoleon's defeat in 1815, would still refer to him as the emperor, in a sentence like

(1) The emperor is prisoner at Saint-Helena.

Now, the use of the expression 'the emperor' in (1) can be understood in at least two ways. First, it may be a referential use of a definite description, in Donnellan's sense.⁶ According to Donnellan, definite descriptions may be used effectively to refer to individuals even if the properties denoted by these descriptions do not belong in the strictest sense to the individual. One may successfully refer to someone drinking vodka by the expression: «the man with

the martini glass.» Similarly, «the emperor» may mean «the individual» who until recently was the emperor of France.» Second, the expression «the emperor» can be used attributively, meaning «the unique being who exists and is an emperor of France and the only such emperor.» When used attributively, the expression 'the emperor' renders (1)false, since Napoleon resides at Saint-Helena precisely by virtue of having been deposed. However, the attributive reading has an interesting variant. Consider a devoted Bonapartist who utters (1); for him the meaning of the sentence would be something like: «the individual who in his own right and according to the best interests of France is the emperor, is, due to unfortunate circumstances, held prisoner at Saint-Helena.» For the Bonapartist, Napoleon's being the emperor of France is a state of affairs which belongs to the best possible course of the world. That Napoleon is held prisoner is an indication about the world's not having taken its best possible course.

Reference to sacred objects or being via definite descriptions may equally be classified into these uses. An expression like 'the son of God' or 'the Messiah' may be used to refer to «the individual Christians believe to be the son of God or the Messiah.» This is a referential use, which does not necessarily accept the truth of the predicates. For Christians, however, the expressions are used attributively: the predicate 'the son of God' is assumed to be true about Jesus. But notice that along with this assumption goes the conviction that the fact that Jesus is the son of God or the Messiah indicates that the world has taken its best possible course. Similarly, the Kwakiutl novice attributes to the pole the property of 'Pillar of the World' with the understanding that this is so in a very privileged course of the world. In a certain sense, the state of affairs in which the pole is the Pillar of the World is preferable to any state of affairs in which this is not the case. For the believers, the descriptions applied to sacred being and objects contain a reference to the optimal course of the world. Sacred being and objects satisfy the description in the best possible state of affairs, from the point of view of the believers.

If this is so, if in the best course of the world the pole is the pillar of the world, what about the property *pole* displayed by the object? On the profane level, the pole is certainly a pole, but not *just* a pole. The attribute receives a supplementary connotation of «privileged, uncommon.» Due to the sacralization of the object, for both initiated and noninitiated people belonging to the community, the pole of the worship house is not a pole like the others.

Accordingly, in situations where the distinction sacred-profane is present, one notices: 1. the establishment of a special relation of designation, the «best course of the world» designation, which denotes the sacred object as manifesting the presence of the sacred, and 2. the adding of the note «privileged, uncommon» to the usual attributes of the object, on the profane level. This note is present when sacred objects are talked about outside their proper religious function. The Holy Land is called 'holy' even outside purely religious contexts. The connotation of the term outside such contexts is «special, privileged, uncommon.»

These two characteristics typically signal the presence of a two-level ontology, that is, of a complex structure wherein a given object belongs to two different sets of worlds, having in each of these different properties, functions and ontological weight. The worlds in which the individual called Jesus, the pole of the worship house, the grotto at Lourdes exist, but are clearly different from the worlds inhabited by the son of God, the Pole of the World, and the Holy Virgin. Interestingly, this difference is there not only for the skeptic and the materialist, but also for the believer, who often perceives the world as profane in its texture, but sanctified by the epiphany of the holy manifesting itself precisely in these «privileged, uncommon» places, the holy spaces where channels open between the two worlds. Sacred beings, holy objects, miraculous or prophetic grottoes, holy mountains, places of worship, all these provide for the articulation points where the two worlds meet, in what one could call an *ontological fusion.*

By this term I understand a two-level ontology possessing a set of entities which belong to both levels. It is certainly conceivable that a fusion be complete, in the sense that all the entities of one level play a role at the other level. Think of esoteric doctrines teaching universal symbolism. Within such doctrines, virtually each object belonging to the literal world has a place in the ontological framework of a secondary, symbolic world. Under such a view, the task of the wise is to decipher the place occupied within the hidden real world by the objects perceived in the world of appearance. Pushed to the limits, every major religion is a project of complete ontological fusion. The presence of the holy converts the entire universe by attributing to each of its parts a religious meaning. Similarly, scientific projects are often based on complete fusions. Atomic physics posits an invisible level of reality coextensive with the world of everyday experience, but structurally different from it. On the other hand, partial ontological fusions are equally fre-

quent. The manifestation of the sacred doesn't always take a pan-cosmic character. Most social organizations tend to limit the expansion of the sacred. When they succeed, the fusion points between the two ontologies are restricted to the sacred space (temples, worship houses, places of sacrifice), to the sacred objects, and to the celebration periods (ceremonies, feasts, festivals). The remaining space and time, the non-holy objects and activities obey only the laws and constraints of the profane world.

The world view of a given community may thus divide into several *ontological landscapes*. We shall characterize an ontological landscape as an ontology or an ontological fusion which governs a domain of the collective life. We speak of collective life in order to emphasize the role of the users of ontologies as human communities in particular socio-historical contexts. The notion of ontological landscape is designed to stress the fact that various communities make different uses of ontologies. Thus, European society at the end of the XVIIIth century was still keeping the Christian landscape as an essential element of its ontological territory. This territory was however much wider than the Christian ontology:even among those not primarily interested in the progress of science the rumor circulated that new and disturbing cosmological theories were being proposed. We might assume safely that most of Haydn's admirers never managed to study closely the new cosmology. However, any educated person of the XVIIIth century could have planned to acquaint the new cosmology, the existence of which, together with some general characteristic, was common knowledge. Nonetheless, despite these new territories, it was still possible to celebrate the beauty of the land which stayed for centuries at the center of civilization. The enthusiasm with which Haydn's *Creation* was received cannot be explained otherwise. The oratorio must have been perceived as a magnificent opportunity to explore the old ontology, so beautiful, so close at hand, so reassuring.

III

Conversely, one may easily think of a situation where, after having lived for a long time around an ontological fortress, a certain population starts to spread around on a much wider surface. The steep rock, by now uninhabitable, on which the founders had built the impregnable castle, is declared a historic park; its only use is as a tourist attraction. However, in a certain sense, this castle

may serve as center and emblem for the expanding region. Doesn't geocentric cosmology play a similar role in our time? The image suggested by the preceding remarks is that of an ontological pluralism, whereby the users of ontologies have a choice between several ontological landscapes. In fact, however, the freedom of choice appears to be subject to some constraints. In most periods, people have a rather deep and stable feeling that they live in an ontologically coherent world. If most societies seem to accommodate or at least to authorize some diversity in the ontological landscapes, there are, however, means to indicate that only one of these landscapes represents the ontology proper, or central. Neighbouring ontologies always lead to a process of ontological focalization, to a sorting out, to an ordering of the ontologies in place by the assignment to each of an importance index. The most important ontology may then play the role of absolute norm, of a high court which summons neighbouring ontologies for control and justification. In communities which adopt a certain sacred ontological fusion as their central ontology, while still keeping other peripheral models, the chosen sacred ontology would serve as ultimate truth and regulating principle for the remaining models. When conflicts arise, the peripheral ontologies have to yield. In typical European villages, for instance, popular beliefs in local spirits, witchcraft, etc., coexisted with the new system; even if they were tolerated at the periphery, the slightest danger of expansion or conflict was severely repressed.

Seen from this angle, orthodoxy wasn't as much the defense of a single ontology as the protection of a certain ontological focalization, of a certain ordering of neighbouring ontologies. But, when one observes the large number of beliefs and heresies condemned in the name of one focalization or another, one cannot avoid the impression that ontologies are in a continuous state of fermentation, change and degradation, in a permanent movement, against which the only defense is the dogmatic reinforcement of a certain focalization. Thus, rigidity in the religious organization, dogmatism of any sort, probably have their origin in the need for stability and occasional normalization of the ontological landscape. Enforcing ontological stability is one of the most important tasks of religious, intellectual and artistic super-structures.

Now, the patterns of ontological organization seem to reduce to a few current types. Central ontologies may vary between two extremes: *fusions* and *literal* ontologies. We saw that a fusion is a two-level ontology in which every element of one level plays a role

at the other level as well. A literal ontology is a one level construction; it assumes it represents faithfully all and only what there is. Both fusions and literal ontologies may be in turn strong or weak. A strong literal ontology claims to be the *only* faithful representation of all and only what there is. An example of strong literal ontology is the hard-core positivism, especially in its earlier versions. A weak literal ontology may coexist with other weak literal ontologies or even with other fusions: a more tolerant philosophy of science can thus accept more than one literal representation of what there is. It can even accommodate religious representations of the world.

At the other end of the spectrum, within strong fusions, the sacred ontology tends to cover the whole surface of the profane one, as may be the case in the wholly sacralized world of archaic communities. In weaker fusions, the two levels come in touch with one another only selectively. The educated Christian of the end of the XIXth century believed in a universe governed by natural laws: the sacred ontology retracted to a few isolated points, where the holy timidly inserted itself into an entirely foreign texture. Religiously oriented philosophy solves this encircling either by withdrawing into the existential moral field, since, according to this choice, the true place of the sacred is in the interiority of the subject, or by positing a sacred center of the world, non-affected by the progress of the profane. In both cases, in the heart of the literal we face the epiphany of a metaphor: the unseen, donor of meaning.

Turning now to the peripheral ontologies, we see they fulfill two functions which may be compared to leisure and sports. Leisure ontologies, or ontologies for pleasure, derive in most cases from older, discarded ontologies. Each culture has its ontological ruins, its historical parks, where the members of the community relax and contemplate ontological relics. Greek and Roman gods performed this function till late in the history of European culture. On the other hand, marginal ontologies may be used as training grounds for different ontological tasks. Thus, one of the functions of literary, and more generally, of artistic fiction is to train the members of the community in such abilities as rapid induction, construction of hypotheses, positing of possible worlds, etc.

Communities appear to more or less consciously arrange their ontological space according to principles of landscape architecture, or rather of ontological urban planning. Strong fusions may be compared to the use of natural landscape by communities where life is still close to nature. Weak fusions resemble XIXth century

cities, where the inhabited space was clearly separated from green spaces, to the extent that city dwellers lived and breathed in different places. Strong literal ontologies eliminate landscape variety, similar to the futuristic city from which the vegetal realm would have been excluded. Finally, weak literal ontologies may be compared to our contemporary chaotic cities with their heterogeneous neighbourhoods scattered around, linked only by highway networks.

Thus, ontological planning aims to avoid or at least appease the open conflict between different ontologies. It rationalizes to some extent the irrationality of the ontological space; as a consequence, such questions as «is proposition *p* true or false?» can be relativized to such and such an area of the general landscape. At the beginning of our century, a proposition like «Christ is a man-god,» the truth of which was unquestionably at the center of a strong fusion such as XIIIth century philosophy, remained true within the space arranged for this kind of sentence, without however being true everywhere in the ontological landscape, just as the activity of breathing fresh air, which at some point in human history was coextensive with most human activities, became restricted for the dwellers of the modern megalopolis to certain times and places. And similar to the social rules of behaviour which prescribe special leisure activities dedicated to the periodical consumption of fresh air, there exists in complex ontological landscapes a sort of ontological rules of etiquette which indicate in some detail which propositions should be assented to in various contexts and situations. Thus, the propositions which are obviously true in Church on Sunday morning, are impolitely so in different contexts, such as, say, professional meetings.

Notice also that ontological planning may trigger hostile reactions. There is, indeed, a certain cultural condition which may be called ontological stress. Caused by difficulties of orientation among the complexities of modern ontological arrangements, this type of stress leads to the weakening of our adjustment to ontological landscapes. Its first patient was Don Quixote, unable to tell apart actuality from fiction. In our time the ontological distinctions became much more subtle and complex. The modern city dweller travels long distances between the places where he works, and those where he lives and relaxes. Likewise, the user of complex ontological arrangements has to travel between heterogeneous, if not plainly hostile landscapes, to which he is expected to adjust rapidly and for short periods of time. The worlds of our Churches,

of our political parties, of our psychological counsellors, of our various sets of friends can considerably vary in their inventories of beings. Our capability for ontological adaptation cannot tolerate more than a certain amount of change. When the threshold is reached, there come reactions, interestingly similar to the reactions vis-à-vis the pressure of modern city-life.

These vary between two limits: anarchism and passeism. Ontological anarchism interprets the changes from one landscape to another as indicating a complete absence of ontological order. To the ontological anarchist, each landscape is only the deceitful ossification of one kind of illusion. Each ontological perspective is considered by the anarchist from the point of view of its unavoidable negation. To establish oneself somewhere, to dwell in one of the ontologies, constitutes for the anarchist the most serious error. Paul Feyerabend's epistemological stance is the most articulate expression of ontological anarchism. [7]

Conversely, the passeist deplores old times when ontological stability was still there. Nostalgics of different persuasions, craving for the age of innocence, for the age of cathedrals, or for any other similar past projection of their anxieties, are attracted by what they perceive as the simplicity of assent these periods asked for.

IV

The anarchist assumes that the simultaneous presence of several types of ontological landscapes cancels the credibility of each ontology. Their multiplicity proves that they are all fictitious. Choice between these fictions is made according to purely utilitarian criteria. Any ontology is good, provided it serves a certain purpose; marginal or obsolete landscapes have the same right as central ontologies. In turn, by rejecting ontological multiplicity, the passeist, in his own way, considers the surrounding ontologies as mere fictions, at least in comparison with the overthrown dogma.

Now, the term 'fiction' is used in the last few sentences in a special way, as synonymous with 'error.' Users of ontologies however, spontaneously make the distinctions between fiction and error on the one hand and between fiction and truth on the other. In the light of the previous considerations, this last distinction shouldn't be understood as radically opposing some entirely true ontology to its false alternatives. Especially, this distinction shouldn't be interpreted as opposing rationalist-scientific on-

tologies to religious ones. Indeed, for the *homo religiosus*, myth represents absolute truth; moreover, many modern users adhere to both packages of religious and scientific propositions. Today, it is not difficult to find individuals or groups equally assenting to «Christ is both man and God» and to «the Earth moves around the Sun.» However, at least within a certain normality, it is impossible to believe in the same way these two sentences and «Sherlock Holmes lives on Baker Street.» To deny the divinity of Jesus or the movement of the planets around the sun means to propose a new arrangement of the ontological landscape by disrupting the organization of the sacred or of the established ontology. To deny the existence of Sherlock Holmes, however, doesn't affect the ontological territory. Holmes is there in order not to exist.

V

Our discussion pointed out to the considerable variety and fermentation of ontologies. Changes occur, conflict arises, solutions have to be made up. The notions of ontological landscaping and ontological planning were proposed as sketchy representations of the ways ontological conflict is kept under control. I also stressed that fiction is not coextensive with non-literal ontologies. What then is fiction?

One way of approaching the question is by examining the use of fictional ontologies. It appears indeed that ontologies can have more than one series of users. Let us call the people for whose needs an ontology is devised, its primary users. Due to various cases, a given ontology may cease to be assented to by its primary users, thus losing its truth. This does not necessarily mean that the whole construction, the entities, their properties, their history, etc. are irrevocably discarded. A deposed ontology may find its secondary users, who would employ it as fiction. Mythologies survive this way. Nelson Goodman once suggested that we should replace the question «what is art?» by «when is art?».' Likewise, one might be tempted to just ask «when is fiction?» and to answer along the above-suggested lines: «fiction is when discarded ontologies find secondary users.» But, correct as this answer may be for situations such as the one mentioned, it still misses an important part of the picture.

For, if fiction were only a special use of ontologies produced elsewhere and later abandoned as obsolete, how could one explain the striking fact that as far as we know most societies maintain

some sort of non-religious fictional activites, such as the «laughing stories» of the Cherokees, fables, anecdotes, etc. To derive these from older disused or degraded myths is not always easy: on the contrary, many folk-stories are just nonmythical stuff, rooted in the observation of current social life, customs, etc. These fictional constructions appear to have been designed independently of ontologies whose purpose and use drastically changed over the centuries.

A possible solution to this puzzle would appeal to the notion of ontological landscaping and planning. We saw that an ontological focalization organizes the beliefs of a community around a central ontology. Peripheral ontologies can coexist with the central ones, and serve as play or training grounds for the members of the group. Now, if we take the division of the ontological space into central vs. peripheral ontologies as a very general formal organization of the beliefs of a community, we may localize fiction in the ontological space as a peripheral region used for ludic and instructional purposes. The concrete content of the marginal ontology counts less than its position within the formal organization: fictional space can accommodate almost any ontological construction. Seen this way, fiction is both a pragmatic and a semantic notion: the organization of the ontological space has certainly pragmatic reasons, but the structure itself is clearly semantic. Also, what kind of ontology will fill the fictional space is a pragmatic question: will it be a specially constructed ontology? an old, discarded one? an actual one used fictionally for a short time? But the regularities of the peripheral space itself are of a semantic nature.'

Notice also that in pre-modern societies the veritable activity of the imagination is found in religious and mythological creation. The beings and universes invented by the archaic non-religious fiction certainly cannot measure with the luxuriant ontological creation of the myth-makers. Conversely, in modern societies religious imagination seems to have to a large extent dried up, while fiction covers vast and diverse territories. Today, past mythologies, past scientific theories, past and present literary works, sub-literature, etc. can all be used fictionally. Thus, religious and mythological richness seems to be compatible with fictional poverty, while fictional fertility may correspond to a shortage of religious and mythological imagination.'⁰

The picture may not be so simple: one has to consider also that advances in scientific imagination clearly play a role in the shrink-

ing of the religious ontological production. It seems however reasonable to suggest that the creation of nonempirical entities is to some extent regulated by what one may call the economy of the imaginary, which controls the total amount of idols and fictions used by a society.

VI

What are the consequences of the above proposals for the theory of literary fiction?

First, ontological landscaping suggests that there is more than one kind of existence; conversely, there must be more than one kind of non-existence. Sherlock Holmes didn't exist, for sure, but London did and still does. [11] We saw that double-level ontologies called weak fusions are characterized by the independent existence of a sacred and a profane level, which come in touch with one another in a few privileged spots. But this seems to be precisely the model of fictional ontologies: the fictional level and the level of the «actual-in-the-world» inevitably overlap in some crucial aspects. Reality takes part in or is reinterpreted by or is converted by fiction just as within ontological fusions the profane takes part in or is reinterpreted by or is converted by the sacred. To submit this does not amount to an identification of fiction and the sacred: we merely point to a similarity in their formal ontological structure.

Differences are still considerable; they deserve further exploration. Here are a few suggestions: religious ontologies propose a model of the world which is fundamentally divided, while fictional constructions, once granted the willing suspension of disbelief, generally propose unitary models. The ontological cut in fiction cannot be seen except from outside. A further difference originates in the ludic character of fictional ontologies. Worth being discussed also is the relative complexity of religious constructions as opposed to the relative simplicity of fictional ontologies.

Further, the above remarks may stimulate reflections on the functions of fiction. Tentatively, it may be suggested that within a more general economy of the imaginary fiction plays several functions in turn, according to the relative development of religious imagination. Thus, in societies with a rich religious ontology, fiction may play a secondary role within the overall imagination activity. With the gradual simplification of religious constructions, the territory of fiction becomes more and more crowded. It may harbour discarded ontologies, and function as a privileged peripheral area

in the complex ontological landscape, providing for both leisure and training space.

Such reflections can be continued and refined. Are religious and fictional ontologies meant only to be cult and respectively ludic objects, or are they supposed to offer, at least to some extent, explanatory models of the world? If so, what are the similarities and the differences between them? Is fiction only proposing substantive explanatory models of the world, or does it rather contribute to our basic training in constructing such models? If the answer is yes, how is this done and in how many ways? What would be the role of fiction in an entirely desacralized world? Can fictional ontologies be dangerous? In what way? These are a few among the questions my above proposals could lead us to confront.

NOTES

1. For a history of the reception enjoyed by the work, see H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. IV: *The Years of Creation: 1796-1800* (London: Thames & Hudson and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

2. Starting with Russell's «On Denoting» (1905), in *Logic and Knowledge*, ed. R.C. March (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 39-56, one major problem of XXth century philosophy was how to construct a theory of reference which could effectively exclude non-actual beings.

3. R. Routley, «The Semantical Structure of Fictional Discourse,» *Poetics*, 8 (1979), 3-30; the quotation is at p. 4. A recent sophisticated development of a Meinongian model is T. Parsons, *Nonexistent Beings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

4. See my «Tragedy and the Sacred: Notes towards a Semantic Characterization of a Fictional Genre», *Poetics*, 10 (1981), 231-242, and «Ontological Issues in Poetics: Speech Acts and Fictional Worlds,» Forthcoming in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40 (1981), 167-178.

5. The example comes from M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), who develops the theory of the radical division of sacred vs. profane worlds.

6. K. Donnellan, «Reference and Definite Descriptions,» (1966), reprinted in S. Schwartz ed. *Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 42-65.

7. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: NLB, 1975).

8. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1978), chapter IV, pp. 57-70.

9. Semantic approaches to fiction are presented and/or discussed in Routley, «The Semantical Structure...,» as well as in Castañeda's, Ihwe and Rieser's, Doležel's, Heintz's and Howell's contributions in John Woods and Thomas G. Pavel eds. *Formal Semantics and Literary Theory*, special issue of *Poetics*, 8 (1979), 1-268. For a pragmatic approach, see Siegfried Schmidt, «Towards a Pragmatic Interpretation of Fictionality,» in T.A. van Dijk ed. *Pragmatics of Language and Literature* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1976), pp. 161-78.

10. This remark relates to Bergson's theory of the «fabulatory function» which, according to the French philosopher, is an instinctive drive, meant to correct the destructive potential of rational intelligence. See H. Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1932).

11. John Woods, *The Logic of Fiction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), examines the logic of 'mixed' sentences, containing reference to both actual and fictional beings. T. Parsons *Nonexistent Beings*, pp. 51-52, distinguishes between objects *native* to a story, such as Holmes, and objects that are *immigrants* to the story, e.g. London in Conan Doyle's fiction. London-in-the-story is however different from real London, at least with regard to the inhabitants of Baker Street; Parsons calls the fictional London-in-the-story a 'surrogate' object (p. 57).