

# The Realistic Fallacy, or: The Conception of Literary Narrative Fiction in Analytic Aesthetics

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In this paper, my aim is to show that in Anglo-American analytic aesthetics, the conception of narrative fiction is in general realistic and that it derives from philosophical theories of fiction-making, the act of producing works of literary narrative fiction. I shall firstly broadly show the origins of the problem and illustrate how the so-called realistic fallacy—the view which maintains that fictions consist of propositions which represent the fictional world “as it is”—is committed through the history of philosophical approaches to literature in the analytic tradition. Secondly, I shall show how the fallacy that derives from the 20th Century philosophy of language manifests itself in contemporary analytic aesthetics, using Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen’s influential and well-known Gricean make-believe theory of fiction as an example. Finally, I shall sketch how the prevailing Gricean make-believe theories should be modified in order to reach the literary-fictive use of language and to cover fictions broader than Doyle’s stories and works alike.

*Keywords:* analytic aesthetics, fiction

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## 1. Introduction

When the Estonian philosopher Margit Sutrop discusses in her article “The Act of Reception” (1995) the act of literary reception as treated by analytic philosophers, she says that “their favourite examples are the stories of Conan Doyle” and continues by remarking that

there are many considerably more sophisticated works of fiction (many of them have also aesthetic value) which naturally assume a more sophisticated reading, which not only considers what is represented in the work but also thinks about what the meaning of a certain representation could be and how this meaning is conveyed by the text or produced by the reader. (Sutrop 1995, 205)

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Actually, Sutrop's ironic note on the conception of fiction in analytical philosophical approaches to literature is not as hyperbolic as it may sound. Rather, it is lamentably felicitous. When treating questions concerning the interpretation of fictions, analytic philosophers have concentrated on issues such as truth-values of interpretative statements about a detective who is said to live in Baker Street 221B.

In this paper, my aim is to show that in Anglo-American analytic aesthetics, the conception of literary narrative fiction is in general realistic and that it derives from philosophical theories of fiction-making, the act of producing works of literary narrative fiction. I shall first broadly show the origins of the problem and illustrate how the so-called realistic fallacy—the view which maintains that fictions consist of propositions which represent the fictional world “as it is”—is committed through the history of philosophical approaches to literature in the analytic tradition. Second, I shall show how the fallacy that derives from the 20th Century philosophy of language manifests itself in contemporary analytic aesthetics, using Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen's influential and well-known Gricean make-believe theory of fiction as an example. Finally, I shall sketch how the prevailing Gricean make-believe theories should be modified in order to reach the literary-fictive use of language and to cover literary fictions broader than Doyle's stories and works alike.

## 2. Origins of the fallacy

There are, roughly, two sorts of interest in literature in analytic philosophy. On the one hand, there are metaphysicians and philosophers of language who draw examples from fictional literature to illustrate their philosophical theories. On the other hand, there are aestheticians who are interested in literature as a form of art. However, even today, the main problem of theories of literary fiction in analytic aesthetics is their logical and semantic emphasis and focus on truth and reference which derives from philosophical views of language the theories are built upon. In analytic aesthetics, theories of literary narrative fiction, such as novels and short stories, are generally theories of fiction in the descriptive sense and works of fiction in general; they are rather theories of fictional works than works of literary fiction; rather of the author's fictive mode of speaking than her artistic mode of speaking. In these theories, the author's mode of speaking is defined negatively by saying what it lacks: it is considered a non-assertive, non-referential mode of speaking, instead of a mode of speaking of its own.<sup>1</sup> J. O. Urmson, for one,

<sup>1</sup> Kendall Walton (1990, 78), for one, insightfully notes that to inscribe a series of declarative sentences without asserting them is not necessarily to produce a fiction. Further, he

goes so far as to suggest that fiction is “not as such an art-form but a logically distinct type of utterance” (Urmson 1976, 157). In order to see how the problem manifests itself in the contemporary discussion on the nature of literary fiction in analytic aesthetics, it is illuminating to first have a glance at the history of philosophical approaches to fiction. The three historical views of fiction—most of them theories of fictional literature in general—I shall briefly discuss here before treating the contemporary Gricean-based make-believe theory can be roughly called *the falsity theory*, *the no-reference theory*, and *the pretence theory*.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1 The falsity theory

The view of a fiction as an utterance which consists of false sentences has a long history. Roughly, it can be reduced to David Hume’s (ironic) notion of poets as “liars by profession” (Hume 2000, B1.3.10) or even to Plato’s critique of poetry in *The Republic*. The modern philosophical formulation for the falsity view was given by Bertrand Russell, who in his *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1948) is generally seen to put forward a theory of fictional names which also applies to fictional literature.<sup>3</sup> For Russell, propositions in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* were false simply because there was no one called Hamlet. In his theory of descriptions, Russell considered non-referring sentences false, for he saw them to incorporate false existential claims (Russell 1948, 294; Russell 1905, 491).<sup>4</sup> The falsity theory was based in the notion that sentences in fictions do not conform to the reality; because (most) sentences in fictions would turn out to be false about the actual world if they were applied as assertions in non-fictional discourse, falsity theories straightforwardly declared fictional sentences false. Thus, roughly put, philosophical theories of fiction began with a suggestion that fictions are to be defined negatively as stories

suggests that fiction is not “just language stripped of some of its normal functions” but “something positive, something special.” In turn, for a detailed critique of the logical and semantic emphasis and the representational view of language in analytic aesthetics, see e.g. (Prado 1984) and (Gibson 2007). Here, see also (Lamarque 2008, 174).

<sup>2</sup> All theories presented in these three groups are neither distinctively about *literary* fiction (Russell, for instance) nor explicitly of *fictional* literature (Ohmann, for instance).

<sup>3</sup> When speaking of Hamlet as a fictional object, Russell seems to ignore the descriptive mode of the utterance Shakespeare uses in *Hamlet*. It should be, however, noted that Russell’s theory is not devised distinctively as a theory of *literary* fiction. Here, I shall nevertheless follow the standard interpretation which maintains that Russell’s philosophy of language can be applied to literary fiction, suggested by philosophers such as Marcia Muelder Eaton, Thomas G. Pavel, C. G. Prado, Stein Haugom Olsen, Peter Lamarque, Amie L. Thomasson, John Gibson and Wolfgang Huemer.

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Russell considers propositions in fiction false by design, for the authors know the implicit existential claims preceding their propositions to be false. For other formulations of the falsity thesis, see (Ayer 1936) and (Goodman 1984).

which lack truth.

## 2.2 The no-reference theory

The falsity theory was, nevertheless, soon considered false itself, for it was noted that the question of fictionality is not essentially a semantic issue and that the truth-values of sentences cannot distinguish the false and the fictional. The critics took their dictum from Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595), in which the author declares that "Now for the Poet, he nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth." Broadly considered, this so-called no-reference theory which was implicit in Sidney's line and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's view of "the suspension of disbelief," had got its philosophical formulation already in Gottlob Frege's philosophy of language. In his article "On Sense and Reference" (1892) Frege suggested that in reading works of fictional literature readers are not interested in the reference (*Bedeutung*) but (apart from "the euphony of the language") in the sense (*Sinn*) of the sentences that constitute the work. As Frege saw it, works of art are not approached for their truth, and hence it is irrelevant whether the name 'Odysseus' has a referent or not (Frege 1948, 215–216). Further, in his article "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry," Frege suggested that indicative sentences in fictional literature do not have assertive force. According to him, a "stage assertion" is "only apparent assertion," "only acting, only fancy" (Frege 1956, 294).<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by Frege, the focus of the philosophical interest moved from semantics and the denotation of proper names in fiction to pragmatics and the author's referential intentions. Frege's suggestion about the distinction between the content of a work of fiction and its mode of presentation was explicated by P. F. Strawson, who suggested that "sophisticated romancing" and "sophisticated fiction" depend upon "spurious use of language." In his example, Strawson begins a story by 'The king of France is wise,' continued with 'and he lives in a golden castle and has a hundred wives' which is ought to make the hearer to understand, by stylistic conventions, that the speaker was neither referring nor making a false statement.<sup>6</sup> Following Strawson's suggestion, H. L. A. Hart was one of the first to speak about the story-teller's distinctive use of language. Hart argued that there is a logical difference between assertive and fictive use of language, for there are no existential presuppositions in the latter. As he saw it, the "storyteller's use of sentences does not in fact satisfy the conventional requirement for normal

<sup>5</sup> Prof. Haaparanta has aptly remarked that (akin Russell) Frege did not formulate a literary theory but used works of fictional literature as examples in his theory of meaning.

<sup>6</sup> See (Strawson 1950, 331).

use, but he speaks *as if* they did” (Hart 1951, 208).<sup>7</sup> The tradition started by Frege maintained that the author offers propositions, whose sense (or meaning) the reader is to entertain or reflect upon. In the no-reference theories, the author’s mode of speaking was still considered negatively as a language which lacks referential force.

### 2.3 The pretence theory

The no-reference theories regarded the act of fiction-making simply as non-assertive. However, the author’s act of fiction-making was soon regarded as such in the pretence theories which maintained that in writing fiction, the author is doing something besides not referring: she is attending in the act of pretence.<sup>8</sup> Pretence theories of fiction can be roughly distinguished to three groups: *the pretending that something is the case theory*, *the pretending to be someone theory* and *the pretending to do something theory*. The traditional philosophical theory of fiction-making as pretence advances the view that in writing a fiction, the author is pretending that something is the case. As Gilbert Ryle, for instance, saw it, in fiction-making the author presents “a highly complex predicate” and pretends that what she says is the case (Ryle 1933, 39).<sup>9</sup> In turn, the pretending to be someone theory has been advanced by philosophers such David Lewis, who suggested that in writing fiction the “storyteller purports to be telling the truth about matters whereof he has knowledge” and “to be talking about characters who are known to him, and whom he refers to, typically, by means of their ordinary proper names,” without the intention to deceive (Lewis 1978, 40). The most well-known brand of the pretending to do something theory derives from J. L. Austin’s philosophy of language, in which Austin suggested passing by that sentences used in fiction are “parasitic,” or “etiolated,” upon the normal use of language.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For similar views, see (Sellars 1954), (Urmson 1976) and (Inwagen 1977). After Hart, the no-reference theory has been developed by philosophers such as Joseph Margolis (1965, 1980), Alvin Plantinga (1989), Roger Scruton (1974), Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980) and Peter Lamarque (1983).

<sup>8</sup> ‘Pretence’ was mentioned (synonymous to entertaining on or reflecting upon) already in some theories I have classified as no-reference theories. What the “pretence theories proper” emphasized was that the author and the reader are actively attending in pretence.

<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Margaret Macdonald (1954, 176–177) suggests that in writing fiction, the storyteller pretends “factual description” and, for instance, “that there was a Becky Sharp, an adventuress, who finally came to grief,” and by her pretence the story-teller creates Becky Sharp.

<sup>10</sup> See (Austin 1975, 22, 104). There are, roughly, two brands of speech act theories of fiction. Most speech act theories consider fiction-making as pretension of some sort; call them pretence theories. There are, however, some speech act theories which consider fiction-making an illocutionary act of its own: “a translocutionary speech act” (Eaton), “a speech act of mimesis” (Ohmann), “a fictive verbal act” (Smith), “a genuine illocutionary act of

Austin's suggestion was developed by John R. Searle, who argued that the author is not asserting but "pretending, one could say, to make an assertion, or acting as if she were making an assertion, or going through the motions of making an assertion, or imitating the making of an assertion" (Searle 1974, 324).<sup>11</sup> The problem of pretence theories was, in turn, that they failed to see that fictive utterances are genuine speech acts which project fictional worlds and which may also function as indirect speech acts, as in satires and parodies.

Now, in all these three groups of theories, the falsity theory, the no-reference theory, and the pretence theory, one can easily see the basic problem of analytic philosophy of literature: the interest was in the logical nature of fictive utterances rather than the distinct features of "literary-fictive utterances." What was wrong with these theories was that they defined a work of literary art as a discourse which merely mimicks the so-called serious discourse. It follows that a literary fiction is like a history book which lacks truth or referential force.

### 3. The make-believe theory

During the last decades, theories of literature in analytic aesthetics have paid more and more attention to the aesthetic qualities of literary fiction. Many philosophers have called their subject literary aesthetics to distinguish their approach from the earlier philosophical theories which simply applied philosophy of language to literature.<sup>12</sup> The prevailing philosophical theories of literary fiction which consider fiction-making as the production of a genuine utterance, derive from Paul Grice's philosophy of language and his theory of the speaker's "meaning-intention." The most well-known Gricean based theories of fiction-making are the make-believe theories put forward by Gregory Currie in his *Nature of Fiction* (1990), and Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen in their *Truth, Fiction, and Literature* (1994).<sup>13</sup> In this pa-

fiction-making" (Currie 1988) or "an act of fiction-making" (Genette); call them story-telling theories. Nevertheless, story-telling theories generally lean on a theory of pretence and suggest that the author's act of fiction-making is generated by pretended illocutionary acts.

<sup>11</sup> This view has often been called the "Austin/Searle" version. The term is, however, inadequate, for Searle suggests that when composing a first-person fictional narrative, the author pretends to be the narrator.

<sup>12</sup> For an interesting discussion about differences between philosophy of literature and literary aesthetics, see e.g. (Lamarque and Olsen 2004).

<sup>13</sup> For overviews of the realist conception of literature in make-believe theories of fiction, see e.g. (Kraft 1970, esp. 345) and (Runcie 2001). For a critical view of the type of fiction analytic philosophers generally consider interesting, see (Knight 2002, 20–25). For a seminal make-believe theory of fiction (which, however, rejects the author's fictive intention as a

per, I shall focus on Lamarque and Olsen's theory, because the realistic conception of fiction implied in the prevailing Gricean make-believe theory of fiction best manifests itself in it.

Lamarque and Olsen argue that the fictional content of a work is explained in terms of fictional objects which are explained in terms of fictional descriptions which, in turn, are explained in terms of fictive utterances (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 32–33, 77). As they see it, the fictive utterance is a genuine communicative act that is carried out for a purpose and governed by the conventions determined by the practice of story-telling. Further, Lamarque and Olsen argue that literary fiction-making is a linguistic act which involves the making of descriptions (or predicates) which, in turn, makes the act “primarily propositional.” (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 41) In producing a fiction, the author—or “the story-teller”—, using the fictive mode of utterance, makes up a story by uttering fictional descriptions, “sentences (or propositions, i.e. sentence-meanings),” which are intended to evoke a certain sort of response in the reader (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 43).

In their definition they call “broadly Gricean,” Lamarque and Olsen consider a text fiction if and only if it is presented by the author with the intention that readers shall adopt a fictive stance (determined by conventions of story-telling) toward the propositional content of the work on the basis of recognizing the author's fictive intention. Lamarque and Olsen suggest that the author, when she presents descriptions using the fictive stance, intends her audience to respond to the descriptions by reflecting on the propositional content of the sentences, to construct imaginative supplementation for them if needed, to make-believe their truth and reference, that is, to make-believe (or imagine or pretend) that actual people, events, places, and so on, are being described even where the readers know they are not, and to block inferences from the fictive utterance to the author, especially inferences about her beliefs (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 45–46).

Here, Lamarque and Olsen commit the realistic fallacy. They consider literary fiction-making a propositional act in which the story-teller's descriptions transparently depict the world of fiction. Further, they imply that fiction-making is a make-believedly authentic depiction of actual human experience and something to be make-believed as true of the actual world. It is, however, important to notice that Lamarque and Olsen make a subtle distinction between the partly intersecting groups of fiction and literature, and the author's fictive intention and the literary intention.<sup>14</sup> For them, fic-

necessary condition for a work of fiction and is not hence discussed here), see (Walton 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Before Lamarque and Olsen's subtle analysis, the distinction between fiction as a descriptive term and literature as an evaluative term has been made by Searle (1974), for instance.

tion is defined by referring to the author's mode of speaking, whereas literature is defined by referring to the author's artistic aims and especially to the aesthetic values the literary institution governs. As Lamarque and Olsen see it, the author's intention to produce a work of literature is to invite the reader to adopt toward the text a complex attitude they call the literary stance. According to them, to adopt the literary stance is to identify the text as a literary work of art and apprehend it (or its thematic content) according to the conventions governed by the literary practice (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 256, 408–409). Thus, they maintain that in creating a work of literary fiction the author's intention is twofold: she has the fictive intention to invite readers to make-believe the propositional content of the work and the literary intention to invite them to appreciate the work aesthetically. The mistake Lamarque and Olsen make is that they treat the act of fiction-making and the act of literature-making separately: they first define fiction-making by referring to the author's mode of speaking and afterwards add the author's literary intention, both involved in the act of producing a literary fiction. However, the author's fictive and literary intention should not be considered autonomous, for her literary intention makes the (proposition-centered) make-believe theory of fiction inadequate.

#### 4. Toward a literary-fictive use of language

Admittedly, fictions consist to a large part of propositions in general. However, fictional worlds created in the act of literary fiction-making are also projected by other remarkable means than descriptions and propositions. Let us consider, for instance, following passages:

What clashes here of wills gen wonts, oystrygods gaggin fishygods!  
 Brékkkek Kékkkek Kékkkek Kékkkek Kékkkek! Kóax Kóax Kóax! Ualu  
 Ualu Ualu! Quaouauh! Where the Baddelaries partisans are still out  
 to mathmaster Malachus Micgranes and the Verdons catapelting the  
 camibalistics out of the Whoyteboyce of Hoodie Head. Assiegates and  
 boomerinstroms. Sod's brood, be me fear! Sanglorians, save! Arms  
 apeal with larms, appalling. Killykillkilly: a toll, a toll. What chance  
 cuddleys, what cashels aired and ventilated! What bidimetoloves sin-  
 duced by what tegotetabsolvers! What true feeling for their's hayair  
 with what strawng voice of false jiccup! O here here how hoth sprow-  
 led met the duskt the father of fornicationists but, (O my shining stars  
 and body!) how hath fanespanned most high heaven the skysign of  
 soft advertisement! But waz iz? Iseut? Ere were sewers? The oaks of  
 ald now they lie in peat yet elms leap where askes lay. Phall if you but  
 will, rise you must: and none so soon either shall the pharce for the  
 nunce come to a setdown secular phoenish (Joyce 1975, 4).

Où maintenant? Quand maintenant? Qui maintenant? Sans me le

demander. Dire je. Sans le penser. Appeler ça des questions, des hypothèses. Aller de l'avant, appeler ça aller, appeler ça de l'avant (Beckett 1953, 7).

These citations illustrate the central problem in Lamarque and Olsen's theory. Now, following Lamarque and Olsen's suggestion and considering the passages above as the story-teller's fictive utterances and merely entertaining their propositional content, the reader would miss a lot. Clearly, a plausible account of literary fiction-making requires modifications to the Gricean theory of the fictive utterance. The elements to be discussed are, first, the nature of fictive utterances and the author's literary-fictive mode of speaking, and second, the narrative point of view included in the literary-fictive utterance.

#### 4.1 The author's literary-fictive mode of speaking

To begin with, theories of literary fiction should not barbarically reduce the fictive utterance to its constituent descriptions. In the two passages cited, there are hardly linguistic units which could be called fictional descriptions or predicates in the strict Lamarque-Olsenian sense. More like, the citations question the idea of literary world-projection as a propositional act. Now, rather than a group of predicates, a literary fiction should be considered a complex literary-fictive utterance which may contain not only declarative sentences, questions, commands, and exclamations, but also all sort of broken utterances such as sentences that lack the finitive verb, or even phonetic transcription, as in Joyce's case.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, one should note that literary fictional worlds are being created to a large part by implication,<sup>16</sup> an issue which has to be included in the very definition of the literary-fictive utterance.

Another element to be modified in the Gricean view of the author's mode of speaking relates to her literary and fictive intentions. The narrowness of the literary-fictive utterance as defined in the make-believe theory manifests itself clearly when investigating the author's (intentional) literary use of language. As Ina Loewenberg notes, while speakers follow conventions of the language in their everyday discourse, literary artists often modify the

<sup>15</sup> For such views, see e.g. (Stecker 2006); see also Eldridge's (2006, 15–16) view on the literary use of language. For a critical view of the paradigm utterance of literary language in analytic aesthetics, see (Graff 1979, 154). For an insightful view of language in the realist novel, see (Watt 1957, 27–30).

<sup>16</sup> David Davies (2007), for one, has developed Gricean theory of fiction by emphasizing the role of conversational implicature in the act of fiction-making. (See also (McCormick 1988, 83–85).) Beardsley (1981, 127), in turn, has suggested that fiction “tends not merely to describe character abstractly but to leave it partly to be inferred from action, and its judgment upon the significance of events is suggested rather than overtly stated. And this is secondary meaning.” Here, see also (Palmer 1992, 49–51, 54).

medium they use (Loewenberg 1975, 41, 45, 48). Likewise, Donald Davidson suggests that in a theory of literary interpretation, one should make a distinction between conventional *ordinary meaning of language* and intentional *literary innovative use of language*. As an example of literary innovative use of language, Davidson mentions Joyce's use of 'Dyoublong', which in an intentionalist interpretation may be seen to contain both the meanings 'Do you belong' and 'Dublin' (Davidson 2005a, 152).<sup>17</sup>

In composing a literary artwork, the author invites the reader to examine and enjoy the linguistic and stylistic properties of her work. Consider, for instance, modernist authors such as Beckett, Joyce, and Faulkner. In reading their works, the reader has to first learn the author's idiosyncratic use of language, so that the linguistic conventions the author sets in the work will become familiar for the reader, and the aesthetic appreciation of the work may become possible. Moreover, the author's literary use of language, its tone and style, has admittedly a "surplus of meaning," which cannot be reduced to the propositional content of the work. Now, in Lamarque and Olsen's Gricean theory of literature, the author's literary intention is considered an aim to invite the reader to a literary response toward the work, whereas the literary response is defined as aesthetic appreciation and evaluation. Nevertheless, in an adequate definition one should say that the author's literary intention is an aim to invite the reader to a literary response which asks for appreciation and evaluation—not only of the theme of the work, as Lamarque and Olsen suggest but also—of the author's literary use of language and the aesthetic properties of her literary-fictive utterance, such as tone, images, characterizations, illustrations, sound, and the like.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the author's fictive intention that is seen to invite the reader to adopt the fictive stance toward the content of the work (after the reader has recognized the author's fictive intention in the work) should not be defined in terms of make-believe—as pretending that something is real—but imagination (imagining that). This is not only a terminological matter, for it also has strong philosophical implications. In philosophical theories of fiction which take the fictive utterance as imitation of some sort, were it pretence or make-believe, the author's mode of speaking is generally seen to remove the bind between the speaker and her utterance, the author and the

<sup>17</sup> On interpreting literary language, see also (Davidson 2005c, 90–92) and (Davidson 2005b, 173–174, 179–181). Sherri Irvin (2006, 122–123), in turn, speaks of the author's "idiosyncratic" use of words. She remarks that it is common for authors to use words in "a way not permitted by linguistic conventions on any construal" but so that the author's intended meaning of the words can be explicated by using "other aspects of the work" as an evidence of the idiosyncratic use and meaning.

<sup>18</sup> Here, one meets the realistic fallacy again. As Ian Watt notes in his study *Rise of the Novel* (1957), the realist novel avoids poetic language.

work. As these theories consider fictions subordinate to serious discourse or informative utterance, they take fictions as mere play with words. However, instead of description without referential force, the author's mode of speaking should be considered a "serious imaginative activity." Fictions often treat matters of universal human interest. They express genuine beliefs concerning philosophical, ethical, and political issues, for instance, and they have significant and distinct cognitive value and an "illocutionary force" of their own.

#### 4.2 The point of view

The second fundamental issue that has to be taken into account in a Gricean theory of the literary-fictive utterance is the narrative's point of view. Literary-fictive utterances differ from other sorts of fictive utterances, such as hypotheses in science, in that they project (artistic) worlds and that they do this from a certain (often subjective) point of view. Unlike it is implied in many philosophical theories of fiction-making, a narrator is not an entity, who simply reports fictional facts. Fictional objects, such as characters in a fiction, are not constructed by the story-teller's transparent fictive descriptions, but the narrator's style and tone (and evaluations) play a central role in literary world-projecting. And besides her tone, the narrator's status also affects on the picture of the fictional world projected. Many philosophical theories of fiction fail to see that the narrator is often a participant character, who has a limited point of view—her view of the fictional world is partial—and subjective understanding and whose account of events can be reasoned to be unreliable.<sup>19</sup> Even Dr. Watson should not be considered a reliable narrator because of his limited understanding of the events he describes.

Naturally, Lamarque and Olsen admit that the so-called aspectual features have an important role in determining what is true in a fiction (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 132).<sup>20</sup> The most central questions here are, what is the origin of the aspectual features and whether the narrator is a convention related to literary response or a logical property of the fictive utterance. Here, many philosophers argue that all fictions do not have a (fictional) narrator and that the author may produce fictive utterances without postulating a narrator. Likewise, Lamarque and Olsen argue that the narrator "does not play any fundamental role in understanding fictive utterance" (Lamarque

<sup>19</sup> There are also works in which different narrators give conflicting reports on events, and there are novels in which the narrator may change so that the switchover is not signalled clearly. Sometimes it is not clear at all, who is reporting the events.

<sup>20</sup> See (Lamarque 1996) for a detailed and insightful account on the aspectual qualities of narratives and on *interpreting* what is true in a fiction.

and Olsen 1994, 62).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, they also emphasize the role of narrative viewpoints in literary interpretation. They maintain that the “aspectual nature” of fictional content is not a feature of a language of fiction but of the “conventional response associated with the fictive stance” (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 138; cf. 132).<sup>22</sup> As they see it, the narrator should be considered a convention of the literary practice which governs the appropriate response toward the story (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 40). The requirements Lamarque and Olsen ask from the literary response, however, conflict with their very theory of fiction-making. They ask for something their theory of the fictive utterance does not provide: the narrative situation.<sup>23</sup> Lamarque and Olsen’s emphasis of the role of the narrator in their view of the literary response is hence an *ad hoc* solution to the problems their straightforward theory of the fictive utterance causes. The problem is that although Lamarque and Olsen’s theory is of literary fiction-making, their separate views of literature and fiction conflict.

In Lamarque and Olsen’s theory, as in analytic aesthetics in general, the implicit conception of literary narration is mimetic; it is the story-teller who puts forward the propositions that constitute the story. However, the (fictional) narrator and the point of view have to be included already in the theory of fiction-making. In some theories of fiction, it has been suggested that sentences in fiction are implicitly prefixed by an operator ‘In ... (by ...),’ which means that there is a narrator implied in the fictive utterance (Castañeda 1979, 44),<sup>24</sup> and that the logical form of a fictional story includes the

<sup>21</sup> The authors suggest that the postulation of “a fictional narrator” who is explained independently of the author does “play a significant part in the practice of telling stories,” as it “serves as a focus for an audience’s make-believe and for the attitudes and points of view projected in a narrative but it also helps account for the blocking of inferences back to the story-teller (for example, about the story-teller’s beliefs).” Further, Lamarque and Olsen (1994, 143) make a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic points of view in a narrative. Their intrinsic point of view suggests that fictive predicates themselves embody viewpoints, whereas their extrinsic narrative point of view suggests the author (in the role of the story-teller) offers a viewpoint in the characterization by her the tone and style. Here, see also (Lamarque 2008, 183).

<sup>22</sup> See also (Lamarque 2008, 104).

<sup>23</sup> Here, see Walton’s (1990, 358–363) account on narrators’ reliability. Likewise, Gregory Currie has written many insightful articles on unreliable narrators and narratives and reasoning what is true in fiction. See, for example, (Currie 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Here, see Beardsley’s (1981, 238, 240) view of the “literary structure.” See also Parsons’ (1980, 176) theory of fiction (exemplified with Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes novels), in which he suggests that sentences in fiction should not be considered fictional truth-reports but as the narrator’s (or other characters’) accounts subject to interpretation. In turn, Colin Falck (1988, 365) argues that

It must surely be significant, also, that the examples used in [analyses of the kind of David Lewis’ theory of pretence (which implies an omniscient narrator)] are very often drawn from

postulation of a narrator, who tells the story (Currie 1988, 475).<sup>25</sup> Now, narrators are features of fictions, not interpretative conventions. They are not born in the act of reading but composing a fiction. In writing literary fiction, authors do not merely put down propositions they intend readers to imagine. Rather, they create fictional voices and points of view through which the fictional worlds are being projected. Put in Gricean terms, in producing a literary fictive utterance the author creates a narrator and a point of view which both manifest themselves in the utterance and thus the author invites the reader to recognize that the story is being told by someone and from some point of view.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, I would like to modestly sketch two features of the literary-fictive utterance: First, a Gricean intention that an audience a) imagine that it is being given an account (whose reliability the audience is asked to weigh and whose gaps and implications the audience is asked to fill with the help of their imagination), b) by a certain speaker and c) from a certain point of view, of people, objects, events, and the like, as a result of recognizing the author's intention to invite them for such a response (mutual belief based on conventions of literary-fictive story-telling). Second, a Gricean intention that an audience, by recognizing the author's intention to invite them to such response, shall adopt a special attitude called literary stance which consists in d) interpreting the literary-fictive utterance intentionally as put forward in a artistic mode of speaking, and e) appreciating and evaluating the stylistic properties of the literary utterance and the subject and theme of the work, and f) to entertain the possible messages conveyed by the work and the cultural significance of the story (likewise, mutual belief based on conventions of literary-fictive story-telling).<sup>27</sup>

a genre such as the Sherlock Holmes stories—and more generally, perhaps, that many of the philosophical analyses of literature which try to reduce it to something else are based on genres which are only marginally art at all. It is hard to resist the suspicion that on some unconscious level analysts of this kind may be trying to de-nature art, or to de-mystify it, in order to turn it into something which they find less threateningly ambiguous or less spiritually demanding—like, for example, logic.

<sup>25</sup> As briefly noted in the historical overview, in some speech act theories of fiction fiction-making is considered an act, in which the author pretends to be the narrator who performs the speech acts.

<sup>26</sup> Lamarque and Olsen vaguely mention viewpoints embedded in the fictive utterance. However, they do not discuss the viewpoints in their theory of fiction-making. Their theory of the fictive utterance derives from Fregean conception of fiction as an utterance which lacks truth and reference and which is put forward to be entertained. Further, they suggest that the “narrative voice” in a fiction is that of the story-teller's (which I suppose to mean the public literary role of the actual author).

<sup>27</sup> One could ask whether make-believe theories themselves imply a realistic conception of the novel, for they maintain that novels are to be make-believed as true of the actual world

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the conception of literary narrative fiction in analytic aesthetics is implicitly realistic. Further, I have claimed that analytic philosophers of literature often commit the so-called realistic fallacy as they take fictions to consist (mostly, or to a large part) of “transparent” propositions. Moreover, I have humbly proposed that the prevailing Gricean theories of literary fiction-making should be modified in order to broaden the conception of literary fiction to cover also other than realist fictions: first, rather than sets of propositions or complex predicates, literary fictions should be considered “literary-fictive utterances”; second, the literary response invited by the author in the act of literary fiction-making should be seen to invite the reader to genuinely reflect upon the meaning of the work and to appreciate the author’s use of language as an artistic use of language (diction, composition, sound), and third, fictive utterances that constitute the world of a fiction should not be considered transparent but the narrator and the point of view should be considered as components of the fictive utterance.

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and suggest that novels imitate or represent human life. While make-believe theories often have such implications, considered as the reader’s presuppositions or expectations, the theories generally maintain not only that the reader’s presuppositions are overridden by the author’s descriptions, which signal that the fictional world differs from the actual world, but also that expectations are genre-specific.

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