

**DAVID LEWIS ON MEINONGIAN LOGIC OF FICTION**

**Dale Jacquette**

Pennsylvania State University

*I. Semantics of Fiction*

In “Truth in Fiction,” David Lewis raises four objections to a Meinongian semantics of fiction. Lewis does not deny that a Meinongian logic of fiction could be made to work, but identifies disadvantages in Meinongian semantics as a reason for recommending his own possible worlds alternative.<sup>1</sup>

A Meinongian semantics proposes to explain meaning without ontological prejudice.<sup>2</sup> It analyzes the meaning of the sentence “*a* is *F*” in the same way and by reference to the same semantic principles, regardless of whether or not *a* happens to exist. Meinongian semantic domains admit existent and nonexistent objects, including objects ostensibly referred to in fiction, and permit reference and true predication of constitutive properties to existent and nonexistent objects alike. A Meinongian theory thus interprets the sentence “Sherlock Holmes is a detective” as true, on the grounds that what we mean by the putative proper name “Sherlock Holmes” is a nonexistent object described in the fiction of Arthur Conan Doyle that truly has the property of being a detective in the same way and in the same sense as an existent detective.<sup>3</sup>

Lewis proposes an alternative to Meinong’s object theory that considers the truth of a sentence in a work of fiction only within an explicit story-context. He explains truth in fiction by (selectively) prefixing (most) problematic sentences with the operator, “In such-and-such fiction...” For example, “Sherlock Holmes is a detective,” on Lewis’s analysis, becomes, “In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective.” This is by no means a trivial transformation that reduces the truth of sentences ostensibly about fictional objects to tautologies, analytic or other *a priori* truths. For it does not follow logically or analytically that Sherlock Holmes in the Sherlock Holmes stories is a detective, since the stories might have described Sherlock Holmes as something other than a detective. The effect of Lewis’s proposal is to relocate the truth conditions for a sentence in or about fiction from the immediate content of the sentence to the fictional context in which the sentence appears or to which it applies. The advantage he sees in modal story-contexting is that it avoids the need for nonexistent Meinongian objects.

## *II. Lewis's Challenge to Meinong*

Why not be a Meinongian? What is so bad about nonexistence? Why is it undesirable to refer to nonexistent objects, and why should it be a problem for nonexistent objects to have properties just as existent objects do? How does it help to explain the possession of a property by an object for it to be true that the object exists?

Lewis's modal story-contexting of truth in fiction is in some ways simpler, but in other ways more complex, than the Meinongian theory he criticizes. It is simpler in excluding nonexistent objects. But it entails further complications of its own by requiring a distinction between the semantics for sentences about existent objects as opposed to sentences ostensibly about nonexistent objects. A Meinongian theory by contrast offers a unified, ontically neutral account to explain the meaning of sentences regardless of whatever objects may happen actually to exist or not exist. Lewis's theory is also made more complicated by virtue of positing modal semantic structures of fictional worlds inhabited by objects that do not actually exist.<sup>4</sup> To choose between a Meinongian or Lewis-style semantics of fiction, we must therefore come to terms with conflicting intuitions about potentially incommensurable aesthetic and philosophical values that might cause us to prefer one explanatorily comparable semantic theory over another. If Lewis, as he admits, has no knockdown objections to offer against a Meinongian theory of fiction, then the preferability of Lewis-style modal story-contexting over a Meinongian semantics strongly depends on whether he has successfully uncovered any significant disadvantages in Meinongian semantics as compared with modal story-contexting. Lewis accordingly considers four problems in a Meinongian logic of fiction:

- The problem of distinguishing properties predicated of nonexistent Meinongian objects versus existent entities, and hence of distinguishing the referents of predications involving existent entities versus predications involving nonexistent Meinongian objects.
- The problem of distinguishing a multiplicity of otherwise individually indistinguishable, indefinitely numbered nonexistent Meinongian objects posited in a work of fiction by means of a nonspecific term of plural reference in the absence of adequate identity conditions.
- The problem of restricting the range of quantifiers in comparing the properties of nonexistent Meinongian objects in a work of fiction with those of other nonexistent Meinongian objects in another work of fiction, or with the properties of existent entities.
- The problem of interpreting inferences about the properties of nonexistent Meinongian objects in a work of fiction, especially in conjunction with true propositions about the properties of existent objects that may also be mentioned in the story.

The objections are related and in different ways call attention to the same underlying scepticism about whether properties can reasonably be attributed to the nonexistent objects described in a work of fiction. All four objections, however, can be answered or refuted, thereby blunting Lewis's charge that a Meinongian semantics is at a theoretical disadvantage in comparison with modal story-contexting. A comparison of Meinongian object theory semantics with Lewis-style modal story-contexting, moreover, shows that the two are not incompatible. By itself, without Meinongian object theory, Lewis's proposal is subject to equally powerful countercriticisms. Lewis-style story-contexting needs to be combined with a Meinongian semantics of fiction in order to avoid Lewis's objections to Meinongian object theory and to avoid Meinongian objections to Lewis's story-context-prefixing.

### III. *Real and Fictional Objects and Properties*

Lewis's first objection depends on a peculiar definition of Meinongian semantics. Lewis describes a Meinongian theory of fiction as one that interprets "Holmes wears a silk top hat" and "Nixon wears a silk top hat" as completely on a par, taking descriptions of fictional characters at face value as having the same subject-predicate form. "The only difference," Lewis claims, "would be that the subject terms 'Holmes' and 'Nixon' have referents of radically different sorts: one a fictional character, the other a real-life person of flesh and blood" (p. 261). Lewis rejects this way of contrasting real and fictional objects. He asks:

For one thing, is there not some perfectly good sense in which Holmes, like Nixon, *is* a real-life person of flesh and blood? There are stories about the exploits of super-heroes from other planets, hobbits, fires and storms, vaporous intelligences, and other non-persons. But what a mistake it would be to class the Holmes stories with these! Unlike Clark Kent *et al.*, Sherlock Holmes is just a person – a person of flesh and blood, a being in the very same category as Nixon. (pp. 261-262)

Yet a Meinongian can and should regard Sherlock Holmes, despite being a fictional character, as a flesh and blood human being as much as Richard Nixon. Lewis does not further explain what he means by a Meinongian semantics. But it is central to Meinong's *Gegenstandstheorie* that nonexistent objects can have the same constitutive properties in the same sense as existent entities, regardless of their ontic status. The existence or nonexistence of an object is something else again. Contrary to the opinion of Shakespeare's brooding Prince Hamlet, to be or not to be is not always the question.

A nonexistent object, in a Meinongian semantics, can be a detective, a winged horse, or anything else that thought might freely intend. Sherlock Holmes for a Meinongian is as much flesh and blood as Richard Nixon. Of course, Sherlock Holmes's flesh and blood is not real, actually existent flesh and blood, any more than, more particularly, say, Sherlock Holmes's left eye is a real actually existent

eye, or his violin is a real actually existent violin. The fact that Sherlock Holmes is as much flesh and blood as Richard Nixon is no embarrassment to Meinongian object theory. Lewis distinguishes between the ontic categories of the referents of “Sherlock Holmes” and “Richard Nixon,” by saying that Holmes is “a fictional character” whereas Nixon is “a real life person of flesh and blood.” This is partly true and partly false. There is indeed a difference in the ontic status of the referents of the proper names “Sherlock Holmes” and “Richard Nixon.” It is true to say that Holmes is fictional, and to say that Nixon by contrast is “a real life person.” But it is not true to say that Nixon by contrast with Holmes is a “person of flesh and blood.” Lewis argues that it would be a mistake to say that Holmes is something other than “a person of flesh and blood, a being in the very same category as Nixon” (p. 262). But a Meinongian logic of fiction is not required to say that Holmes is not made of flesh and blood, and Meinongians will more typically insist that Sherlock Holmes, despite being a fictional nonexistent Meinongian object, is as much flesh and blood as Richard Nixon.

Thus, Lewis’s first problem disappears. If we take Lewis’s insight a few steps further, however, we might ask about a work of fiction in which the author declares in all sincerity that Holmes is an actually existent entity or real-life being. What are we to say then about the properties and ontic status of Holmes? Existence, unlike the property of being a detective or playing the violin, is not a property that authors can freely bestow on their fictional creations by their narratives.<sup>5</sup> Meinong’s object theory accordingly makes an important distinction between nuclear (*konstitutorische*) and extranuclear properties (*ausserkonstitutorische Bestimmungen*).<sup>6</sup> Nuclear or constitutive properties are those such as being red or round, made of flesh and blood, being a detective or playing the violin, that can be had by existent or nonexistent Meinongian objects without prejudging their ontological status. Extranuclear or extraconstitutive properties by contrast are those such as being real, existent, subsistent, complete, necessary, or unreal, nonexistent, nonsubsistent, incomplete or impossible; these properties cannot be truly or falsely predicated of an object without thereby expressing a definite commitment to an object’s ontological status. Constitutive ontically neutral properties can be freely truly predicated of objects, as when a novelist or mythmaker dreams up nonexistent fictional objects such as Holmes with the constitutive property of being a detective, smoking a pipe, shooting cocaine, or playing the violin. But extraconstitutive ontically committal properties cannot be freely truly predicated of objects by any act of imagination. A work of fiction, as a result, in which an author maintains that Holmes truly exists, does not truly predicate existence of Holmes. If an author says that Holmes is a detective, on the other hand, then, in a Meinongian semantics, Holmes truly is a detective.

The difference, properly applied, between ontically neutral nuclear or constitutive properties and ontically committal extranuclear or extraconstitutive properties solves many problems in Meinongian semantics. It absorbs the difficulty Lewis mentions, along with strengthened versions such as Russell’s problem of the existent round square and Lewis’s insufficiently disambiguated problem of the real-

life flesh and blood Holmes.<sup>7</sup> We need only distinguish between the properties a Meinongian semantics regards as freely truly attributable to existent or nonexistent objects, and those that are not freely truly attributable, when they have the special function of truly or falsely attributing definite ontic status to an existent or nonexistent object. To the extent that Lewis fails to observe these basic Meinongian distinctions, his first criticism of Meinongian semantics is misdirected.

#### IV. *Indefinitely Numbered Fictional Objects*

Lewis's second objection to Meinongian interpretations of fiction is logically more interesting. He considers a work of fiction in which an indefinitely numbered "chorus" of fictional relatives is said to attend a fictional character:

We can truly say that Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., is attended by a chorus of his sisters and his cousins and his aunts. To make this true, it seems that the domain of fictional characters must contain not only Sir Joseph himself, but also plenty of fictional sisters and cousins and aunts. But how many – five dozen, perhaps? No, for we cannot truly say that the chorus numbers five dozen exactly. We cannot truly say anything exact about its size. Then do we perhaps have a fictional chorus, but no fictional members of this chorus and hence no number of members? No, for we can truly say some things about the size. We are told that the sisters and cousins, even without the aunts, number in dozens. (p. 262)

A chorus, as judged against certain background information in a given cultural context, according to Lewis, does not contain exactly sixty members, but, as the unnamed story maintains, at least some dozens of sisters and cousins. What might a Meinongian theory of fiction say about predications involving indefinitely numbered nonexistent objects? Does Meinongian semantics run afoul of the difficulties Lewis mentions in this objection?

The property of numerability need not be essentially different from other kinds of constitutive properties such as being red or round, a detective, or a flesh-and-blood person. We similarly do not know the exact height or weight of Sherlock Holmes from the stories, nor how many nonexistent cells or molecules Holmes has in his nonexistent flesh and blood. Nor do we need to know. A fictional object in a Meinongian semantics is incomplete with respect to many, perhaps infinitely many, constitutive properties and property complements. If a chorus in fiction does not need to be all male or all female or any particular distribution of genders, why should it have to have any particular number of members?

A Meinongian in desperation might hold that the example Lewis describes involves an impossible Meinongian object, such as the round square. If to be a chorus consisting of no definite number of members is judged somehow to be a *contradictio in adjecto*, then the chorus that attends Sir Joseph Porter is implicitly impossible. Impossible as well as possible nonexistent Meinongian objects can be freely posited by the author of a work of fiction. But a defender of Meinongian semantics need not go so far in this direction to solve Lewis's problem. There are several choices. A Meinongian can interpret the indefiniteness of the number of

chorus members in much the same way as s/he can interpret the incomplete information in a historical report of actual facts no longer subject to verification about the actual number of real members in a real chorus. In both cases, we can assume that there must be a definite number of chorus members, even if we do not know what the number is.

The difference is that in the case of the real chorus there is a definite true answer to the question of how many persons were in the chorus, while in the work of fiction there is no definite true answer. But, again, this is not a problem unique to the indefinite numbering of fictional objects in Meinongian semantics. There is similarly no definite true answer to the question of Holmes's eye color or the precise number of hairs on his head, even though we are probably right to affirm that if Holmes has eyes, then he has some definite eye color, and if he is hirsute, then he has some definite large number of hairs. What, then, is the special difficulty for a Meinongian semantics about an indefinitely numbered fictional chorus?

#### *V. Quantifier Restrictions in Meinongian Semantics*

The third objection in Lewis's discussion concerns the legitimate scope of quantifiers in Meinongian semantics. Lewis maintains:

The Meinongian should not suppose that the quantifiers in descriptions of fictional characters range over all the things he thinks there are, both fictional and non-fictional; but he may not find it easy to say just how the ranges of quantification are to be restricted. Consider whether we can truly say that Holmes was more intelligent than anyone else, before or since. It is certainly appropriate to compare him with some fictional characters, such as Mycroft and Watson; but not with others, such as Poirot or "Slapstick" Libby. It may be appropriate to compare him with some non-fictional characters, such as Newton and Darwin; but probably not with others, such as Conan Doyle or Frank Ramsey. "More intelligent than anyone else" meant something like "more intelligent than anyone else in the world of Sherlock Holmes." The inhabitants of this "world" are drawn partly from the fictional side of the Meinongian domain and partly from the non-fictional side, exhausting neither. (p. 262)

The disadvantage that is supposed to accrue to a Meinongian theory of fiction in light of this objection is difficult to understand. I have to strain even to grasp, let alone sympathize with, the problem Lewis seems to have in mind. Why should it be harder in principle to judge whether Holmes was more intelligent than Einstein as opposed to whether Darwin was more intelligent than Einstein? Comparative intelligence is as elusive a concept to define or apply to existent entities as it is in the case of fictional Meinongian objects.

Lewis argues that we can meaningfully compare Holmes's intelligence with Watson's, apparently since they inhabit the same fictional "world." We can do the same for persons who are either mentioned explicitly in particular stories or who, such as Newton and Darwin, belong to the real world historical background against

which the Sherlock Holmes stories are written and interpreted. Judging from Lewis's examples, we supposedly cannot compare the properties of fictional objects from different works of fiction, nor achronistically with respect to real world persons who lived after the events of the Sherlock Holmes stories are supposed to have occurred. But why not? What is the logical difficulty in trying to decide whether Hercule Poirot was smarter than Sherlock Holmes, or the opposite, on the basis of how the two fictional detectives handle their respective fictional investigations or how they might most reasonably be projected to handle a hypothetical mystery to be solved, or, for that matter, as a reflection of the accomplishments attributed to them in their respective stories, together with whatever we can infer about the degree and kind of intelligence required for their achievement?

Lewis does not explain his reason for thinking that the two kinds of cases are different. The problem of judging the comparative intelligence of Holmes and Poirot seems no more intractable in principle, just because Holmes and Poirot thus far do not happen to have appeared together in the same story, than it would be if someone were now to include them as interacting in the same work of fiction and would have to decide which of them could plausibly be portrayed as more astute. The fact that no single story has been written in which Holmes and Poirot match wits seems no more an obstacle to comparing their intelligences than trying to do so in the case of existent persons who never interacted in life because they lived many years apart, as in trying to determine whether Julius Caesar was smarter than Napoléon Bonaparte, or the reverse. Of course, arguing – or, rather, stipulating, as Lewis does – that there is an important difference in whether or not an individual occupies the same fictional world as another, or in a world up to a certain point in time of which the author of the fiction or the author's characters could be cognizant, fits neatly into Lewis's alternative modal story-contexting semantics of truth in fiction. But we are not driven to Lewis's approach by this particular criticism of Meinong's object theory.<sup>8</sup>

Lewis's objection about the range of quantifiers in a Meinongian semantics of fictional objects is inconclusive. He considers the sentence, "Sherlock Holmes is more intelligent than *anyone* else, before or since" (p. 262). He recognizes that to interpret this quantified sentence in Meinongian semantics, "The inhabitants of this 'world' are drawn partly from the fictional side of the Meinongian domain and partly from the non-fictional side, exhausting neither" (p. 262). This is perfectly true, but unproblematic. A Meinongian theory of fiction can quantify univocally over all objects generally, both existent and nonexistent. Or, it can restrict quantification more precisely to all or some existent or nonexistent Meinongian objects, both generally and as referred to in all or some definite stories, or in all or some definite historical periods, geographical or cultural milieux. The formal logical devices by means of which such quantification can be achieved are similar to those found in classical logic. They include unrestricted quantification over conditionally restricted subsets of the domain, and restricted quantification. A Meinongian semantics permits all of the desired limitations in quantifiers ranging over the Meinongian model of existent and nonexistent objects. The theory allows fiction

makers and interpreters to express complicated properties and comparisons of properties among real and fictional objects.

### *VI. Inferences for Meinongian and Existent Objects*

The fourth and final objection in Lewis's critique calls attention to problems in drawing inferences about fictional objects from their properties as described within a work of fiction, especially in conjunction with background assumptions about the real world. Lewis considers a single example:

Finally, the Meinongian must tell us why truths about fictional characters are cut off, sometimes though not always, from the consequences they ought to imply. We can truly say that Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street. I have been told that the only building at 221B Baker Street, then or now, was a bank. It does not follow, and certainly is not true, that Holmes lived in a bank. (p. 262)

It is true in one sense that the inference from the proposition that Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street, and that the only building that has ever been at 221B Baker Street in the actual world was a bank, so therefore, Holmes lived in a bank, is deductively invalid. Lewis wants to correct the problem by prefixing these propositions with the special modal qualifier, "In such and such a fiction..." which explicitly invalidates the inference. He continues:

The way of the Meinongian is hard, and in this paper I shall explore a simpler alternative. Let us not take our descriptions of fictional characters at face value, but instead let us regard them as abbreviations for longer sentences beginning with an operator "In such-and-such fiction..." Such a phrase is an intensional operator that may be prefixed to a sentence  $\phi$  to form a new sentence. But then the prefixed operator may be dropped by way of abbreviation, leaving us with what sounds like the original sentence  $\phi$  but differs from it in sense. Thus, if I say that Holmes liked to show off, you will take it that I have asserted an abbreviated version of the true sentence "In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Holmes liked to show off." As for the embedded sentence "Holmes liked to show off," taken by itself with the prefixed operator neither explicitly present nor tacitly understood, we may abandon it to the common fate of subject-predicate sentences with denotationless subject terms: automatic falsity or lack of truth value, according to taste. (p. 262)

My reaction to the fallacy of Holmes living in a bank at 221B Baker Street is rather different from Lewis's. I drive contextualization inward to distinguish an equivocation in the reference to 221B Baker Street in the true fictional predication that has Holmes living there as opposed to the true historical predication of the bank's actual location. As I understand these objects in Meinongian semantics, they are not identical, but are misleadingly equivocally designated by the same term, "221B Baker Street." The problem is widespread in Meinongian semantics. The first step in understanding the difficulty is to recognize how commonplace it is.

Napoléon is the name of a real emperor of France, and of a fictional character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. The fact that both are designated by the proper name "Napoléon," by itself, signifies nothing logically, no more than the fact that several persons in the real world can all be named "John Smith." Tolstoy naturally takes advantage of many of the facts he assumes his readers know about the actual Napoléon in creating a fictional Napoléon that bears important points of resemblance to the real emperor. But this need not create undue confusion, regardless of whether or not we try to interpret Tolstoy's fiction in a Meinongian semantics.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, a problem is not solved by remarking on its frequent occurrence. It only leaves more loose ends to bring together. But at least it can be said that Lewis has not uncovered a new, previously unrecognized implication of Meinongian semantics. Meinongians have long advocated the need to distinguish between real and nonexistent objects that may go by the same name and that may even share a significant percentage of their constitutive properties. A disambiguation of equivocal references in and out of fiction is needed in order to avoid the kinds of invalid inferences to which Lewis calls attention. There are at least two different ways of story-contexting a true sentence about a fictional object: Lewis's external or *de dicto* method, and an internal or *de "re"* method. We can distinguish the two methods in this way:

- Lewis-style external *de dicto* story-contextualization
  - In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Sherlock Holmes lives in London at 221B Baker Street.
- Meinongian internal *de "re"* story-contextualization
  - Sherlock Holmes in the Sherlock Holmes stories lives in London at 221B Baker Street.

It is important to recognize that the *de "re"* external story-contextualization does not necessarily attach directly to an actually existent real world *res* or *res extensa*, but to an object generally irrespective of its ontic status. The difference in the two modes of story-contextualization is most dramatically explicated as a distinction by which Lewis-style external *de dicto* story-context-prefixing qualifies the truth of the entire sentence expressing a predication in fiction, and thereby of the predication of a property to a fictional object. By contrast, internal *de "re"* story-contextualization allows the univocal predication of disambiguated constitutive properties related to the real world or to a fictional world existent or nonexistent objects, including fictional Meinongian objects. The troublesome inference in Lewis's fourth objection is equally blocked by either the external *de dicto* or the internal *de "re"* methods of story-contextualization. We cannot validly infer that Holmes lived in a bank in real life or in the Sherlock Holmes stories from the assumption that Holmes in the Sherlock Holmes stories lived in London at 221B Baker Street, and that 221B Baker Street, London, is in real life a bank. But internal *de "re"* story-contextualization, unlike external *de dicto* story-contextualization, serves only to clarify the exact

identity of a relevant fictional object such as Sherlock Holmes, London, or 221B Baker Street, as the one belonging to a certain work of fiction.

What happens if I perversely write a story about Sherlock Holmes in which I deny that Holmes is a detective or that he lived in London at 221B Baker Street, at the same time denouncing all the earlier Sherlock Holmes stories as false? In one sense, I am free to do so. But my impact on the presumptive story context of the Sherlock Holmes stories is likely to be negligible. If I am sufficiently clever and lucky, I might be able to change the content of the Holmes stories context in this way. But it will take much more than merely penning the single sentence I have just written. I may need to develop an entire interesting story or novel-length work that justifies itself as a literary creation on its own merits in addition to reversing some of the properties Sherlock Holmes has acquired in what are recognized as the canonical sources of the Holmes stories.

At the very least, I would need to embed the sentence in a discussion in a philosophical article that over time occasioned enough discussion to have the denials of properties Holmes shares in the other stories become an accepted part of the larger Sherlock Holmes story context. This could happen, but not easily and is not likely. The Sherlock Holmes who is a London detective who lives at 221B Baker Street is relatively safe at least from my efforts to undo his well-established identity. Ironically, the less known a fictional character is, the more insulated it is from character-transforming sequels, spinoffs, parodies, and philosophical thought experiments. In the event that my perverse story should become sufficiently entrenched in the popular consciousness or recognized as necessary to include in canonical Holmes story-contextualizations, there would still be good reason to distinguish Holmes in what had previously been the canonical story-context in which Holmes is a detective living in London at 221B Baker Street from Holmes in my perverse story-context, where he is not a detective and does not live in London at 221B Baker Street. If necessary to avoid confusion in semantic analysis, a theorist could, but hopefully will never need to, go so far as to write:

- Sherlock Holmes in the non-Jacquette Sherlock Holmes stories is a London detective living at 221B Baker Street.

As opposed to:

- Sherlock Holmes in the Jacquette Sherlock Holmes stories is not a detective and does not live in London at 221B Baker Street.

I am not arguing that internal *de "re"* story-contextualization of true sentences in fiction is preferable to Lewis-style external *de dicto* story-contextualization. I only want to observe that the internal *de "re"* method does not inherit the exceptions Lewis acknowledges to his external *de dicto* story-contextualizations. It is easy to see that Lewis's proposal faces special problems when he story-contexts entire

sentences and larger units of discourse, instead of particular references to individual fictional characters or objects.

### *VII. Lewis's Modal Analysis of Fictional Worlds*

The proposal to attach story context prefixes to some sentences in a work of fiction provides only part of Lewis's modal semantics. The truth of the sentence, "In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Holmes is a detective," requires analysis. The ordinary language prefix functions as a fictional modal operator, saying in effect that it is not categorically true that Holmes is a detective, but only in certain logically possible worlds associated with the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Lewis describes a standard modal structure in which a proper subset of logically possible worlds is distinguished as "somehow determined" by a work of fiction. A sentence with its Lewis-style story-contexting prefix is true in Lewis's modal system if it is true in every such logically possible world. Thus, he explains:

Our remaining task is to see what may be said about the analysis of the operators "In such-and-such fiction...". I have already noted that truth in a given fiction is closed under implication. Such closure is the earmark of an operator of relative necessity, an intensional operator that may be analyzed as a restricted universal quantifier over possible worlds. So we might proceed as follows: a prefixed sentence "In fiction  $f$ ,  $\phi$ " is true (or, as we shall also say,  $\phi$  is true in the fiction  $f$ ) iff  $\phi$  is true at every possible world in a certain set, this set being somehow determined by the fiction  $f$ . (p. 264)

The possible worlds approach is interesting and worth developing. But there are also drawbacks in applying modal structures to the logic of fiction. It is important first of all to recognize that modal interpretations are not precluded from Meinongian semantics. There is no reason why a Meinongian logic of fiction could not also be interpreted by means of logically possible worlds. If we think it is true that Sherlock Holmes might have killed Moriarity, then we may find it indispensable to appeal to the modality of this "might" by positing a subset of logically possible worlds in which Holmes has the property of having killed Moriarity. The question remains whether it is necessary to suppose that fictional objects exist in nonactual logically possible worlds, or whether they can have different properties without existing in any logically possible world. The point is that Meinongian logic and a modal theory of logically possible worlds are not exclusive choices. We can and may need to have both. The question is rather whether the logically possible worlds approach favored by Lewis-style *de dicto* modal story-contexting by itself without nonexistent Meinongian objects can provide an adequate semantics of fiction.<sup>10</sup>

There are difficulties first of all about how a fictional world is to be specified. It is one thing to speak loosely of a fictional "world" as that part of a semantic domain designated as containing nonexistent objects associated with the propositions of a work of fiction. It is another matter to invoke an entire logically possible world associated with a work of fiction or within which the propositions of the fiction are true, and the action of the plot, if any, takes place, involving the fictional characters

and objects of the story. The modal approach without benefit of Meinongian object theory must posit nonactual logically possible worlds in which Sherlock Holmes exists as a complete entity, with definite eye color, a definite number of hairs on his head, a definite number of blood cells at any given time, and so on. Such exact specification is not required within the modal theory as a practical task, but the possibility is presupposed. We can wave a wand and stipulate that there are such worlds. But the modal interpretation seems unnecessarily complex in its implications when we recall that its primary philosophical justification is to avoid referring and truly predicating constitutive properties to nonexistent objects.<sup>11</sup> Consider that Lewis's (counterpart) modal semantics of fiction is committed to the existence of indefinitely if not infinitely many different logically possible worlds in which, for example, a counterpart Holmes exists and has precisely 2,000,000 hairs on his head on a certain day, and another in which another relevantly similar counterpart Holmes exists and has precisely 2,000,001 hairs, and so on, in every combination with every other minute specification of Holmes's complete set of properties as an existent object in distinct nonactual logically possible worlds. If Lewis has no decisive refutation of Meinongian object theory, and the question of whether or not to go the Meinongian route is mostly one of comparative aesthetic factors like simplicity, economy, fecundity, and the like, then Lewis's modal structures bereft of Meinongian object theory might be at a distinct disadvantage in the choice between competing semantics of fiction.

Another limitation of Lewis's non-Meinongian modal analysis is even more discouraging. There is no reason to suppose that a work of fiction cannot ostensibly refer to and truly predicate properties of fictional objects that cannot exist in any logically possible world. Meinong, as an implication of the free assumption of intended objects, allows the semantic domain of object theory to include not only contingently nonexistent objects, but also metaphysically impossible objects, such as the round square. Meinong need not say contradictorily that the round square is both round and such that it is not the case that it is not round, or square and such that it is not the case that it is not square. But we should not imagine that there can be any logically possible world where the round square exists and truly has the property of being both round and square. Other more subtle examples are also available. Suppose that an author writes a sequel to the Sherlock Holmes stories in which Holmes meets Gottlob Frege, who, according to the story, successfully effects the reduction of mathematics to logic. There may be logically possible worlds in which Holmes meets Frege, but there are surely no logically possible worlds where mathematics turns out to be reducible to logic. Lewis addresses the problem of impossible fictions when he writes:

I turn finally to vacuous truth in impossible fictions. Let us call a fiction *impossible* iff there is no world where it is told as known fact rather than fiction. That might happen in either of two ways. First, the plot might be impossible. Second, a possible plot might imply that there could be nobody in a position to know or tell of the events in question. If a fiction is impossible in the second way, then to tell it as known fact would be to

know its truth and tell truly something that implies that its truth could not be known; which is impossible. (p. 274)

Since my intuitions about truth in impossible fictions are largely at odds with Lewis's, I can only try to articulate my views and recommend others to test their agreement or disagreement against my misgivings. Lewis distinguishes between blatant and latent impossible fictions. As an example of blatant impossibility in fiction, Lewis considers a story like the one above about Frege, concerning the troubles of the man who squares the circle. A latently impossible fiction by contrast is one in which an author through forgetfulness or the like inadvertently falls into inconsistency, as when Conan Doyle in different stories attributes to Watson the property of having been wounded only once both in the shoulder and in the leg.<sup>12</sup>

Where the plot in a work of fiction is blatantly impossible, Lewis claims that anything, every proposition, is (vacuously) true. He states:

According to [...] my analyses, anything whatever is vacuously true in an impossible fiction. That seems entirely satisfactory if the impossibility is blatant: if we are dealing with a fantasy about the troubles of the man who squared the circle, or with the worst sort of incoherent time-travel story. We should not expect to have a non-trivial concept of truth in blatantly impossible fiction, or perhaps we should expect to have one only under the pretence – not to be taken too seriously – that there are impossible possible worlds as well as the possible possible worlds. (pp. 274-275)

Why should we suppose that according to the story Lewis mentions it is equally true that the man who squared the circle did not square the circle? Or, with reference to the previously mentioned story, why conclude that Frege both reduced mathematics to logic and did not reduce mathematics to logic, that Sherlock Holmes met Frege and that it is not the case that Holmes met Frege, that grass is green and grass is not green? Why suppose that there must occur such inferential explosion in the semantics of fiction, except as a consequence of a questionable allegiance to the paradoxes of strict implication in a classical modal framework? I do not suppose that the authors even of blatantly impossible fictions intend any and every proposition to be logically implied by introducing impossible objects or impossible elements of plot. I am also unprepared to adopt whatever consequences follow from a Lewis-style modal story-contexting *de dicto* approach to the logic of fiction when the acceptability of such a theory as opposed to a Meinongian *de "re"* theory is the problem at issue.

The alternative for an unconventional modal analysis of fiction may then be to expand Lewis's modal structures to include logically impossible as well as logically possible worlds, as some logicians for other reasons have already proposed.<sup>13</sup> Another solution might be to replace the classical propositional logic that Lewis presupposes with a paraconsistent logic.<sup>14</sup> These suggestions represent significant departures from anything Lewis envisions, and their complexity and ontic prodigality would need to be evaluated in comparison with an arguably more straightforward revisionary Meinongian object theory.

Lewis recommends a different type of analysis for fictions that are not so blatantly impossible. He inquires:

But what should we do with a fiction that is not blatantly impossible, but impossible only because the author has been forgetful? I have spoken of truth in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Strictly speaking, these (taken together) are an impossible fiction. Conan Doyle contradicted himself from one story to another about the location of Watson's old war wound. Still, I do not want to say that just anything is true in the Holmes stories! (p. 275)

I do not understand why Lewis thinks that absolutely anything is true in the blatantly impossible story of the man who squares the circle, but not in the Holmes stories. What explains the difference?

Lewis suggests that we maintain logical consistency in the inconsistent Holmes stories by splitting them up into distinct story-contexts. He is willing to follow such a practice even within a single story for the latently inconsistent fragments of its distinguishable parts. This suggests that it is not so much the blatancy of inconsistency in the squared circle story that makes its impossibility unavoidable, but the fact that a single object is defined as having impossible properties in a single compact story subcontext, rather than as the effect of incompatible properties attributed to the object in separate sentences included in the unfolding of a story. The distinction seems superficial, since an inconsistency distributed over multiple sentences might be every bit as blatant as one that is condensed, from the standpoint of the author's deliberate intentions versus forgetfulness in concocting an inconsistent fiction.

To see that there is no clearcut distinction between blatantly and inadvertently impossible fictions, consider the case of Piggy in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Piggy is described as nearsighted. But the bullies among the stranded children who eventually revert to a state of nature steal his glasses and use them to start fires, which cannot be done with the concave lenses needed to correct for nearsightedness. Is this a blatant or latent impossibility? Should the answer depend on what Golding intended, and how much he can reasonably be assumed to know or not to know about geometrical optics? Must the semantics of fiction first settle the problem of the intentional fallacy of which Monroe C. Beardsley and William K. Wimsatt warned the interpreters of artworks?<sup>15</sup> It appears that we cannot decide the status of the impossibility in these works simply by appealing to the question of whether or not it can be resolved by fragmenting the story. We can separate those parts of the text that contain sentences describing Piggy as nearsighted as belonging to a different substory than those describing his glasses being used to concentrate rather than diffuse sunrays in starting a fire. But this does not resolve the impossibility. Nor does it seem reasonable to attribute to Golding the desire to fictionalize even the laws of physics in the "world" projected by his novel. And Piggy, as the particular character he is portrayed as being, seems to vanish if he is not held together by the properties of being both nearsighted and having the kind of glasses the other boys covet for their fire-starting ability, and by the power their possession confers.<sup>16</sup>

The question is not one of blatancy or latency, but of how inconsistency of any sort in an impossible fiction is to be understood. Shall we posit nonexistent impossible Meinongian objects or offer some variation of Lewis's modal story-contexting interpreted in terms of logically possible or impossible worlds. Meinong's *de "re"* semantics in this light appears significantly simpler in comparison with Lewis's *de dicto* modal story-contexting. Are the aesthetic tradeoffs required by a non-Meinongian modal approach to the semantics of fiction adequately compensated by satisfying the pretheoretical desire at all costs to avoid referring to and truly predicating properties of nonexistent objects? Lewis evidently believes so. But in the absence of a more powerful argument against Meinongian theory, the difficulty and disadvantage seem to belong to Lewis's modal analysis.

### VIII. *Toward a Universal Semantics of Fiction and Nonfiction*

It is a remarkable fact that writing and reading as well as talking and writing about fiction proceed so smoothly with so few occasions – primarily those manufactured by logicians and philosophical semanticists – in which it is necessary explicitly to disambiguate story context, internally or externally.

That such disambiguation can always be done in an intuitively correct way is theoretically comforting, even if it bestows no practical advantage on reading or writing or thinking critically about fiction. A novel can be indistinguishable in content, phenomenologically, so to speak, from the reader's standpoint, from a history, as in the fiction of Daniel Defoe, William Thackeray, Tobias Smollett, and many other realistic writers. David Hume, in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, makes a similar observation:

If one person sits down to read a book as a romance and another as a true history, they plainly receive the same ideas, and in the same order, nor does the incredulity of the one, and the belief of the other, hinder them from putting the very same sense upon their author. His words produce the same ideas in both; tho' his testimony has not the same influence on them. The latter has a more lively conception of all the incidents. He enters deeper into the concerns of the persons; represents to himself their actions and characters and friendships and enmities: he even goes so far as to form a notion of their features, and air and person. While the former, who gives no credit to the testimony of the author, has a more faint and languid conception of all of these particulars, and except on account of the style and ingenuity of the composition can receive little entertainment from it.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that fiction functions smoothly without explicit Lewis-style semantic prefixes suggests that philosophically unprejudiced producers and consumers of fiction do not regard the reference and true predication of constitutive properties to nonexistent objects as indistinguishable from that occurring in science or history or extradisciplinary true-or-false factual reporting. This is also why the fine line between fiction and science or history is sometimes easy to blur, and why scientific and historical frauds can be perpetrated. Such facts are more philosophically

significant for logic and semantics than is often appreciated. They powerfully suggest, as Meinongians insist, that the reference to and true predication of constitutive properties to existent, abstract, or nonexistent objects function univocally in precisely the same way in fiction as in science or history. The logic of thought, if it is to be metaphysically indifferent and ontically neutral, must be the same for any discourse, regardless of its intention in conveying what happens to be true or what happens to be false. What is it to logic whether or not Sherlock Holmes exists? What is it to logic whether or not phlogiston or the planet Vulcan exist, or, for that matter, whether or not protons and neutrons or the planet Neptune exist?<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15 (1978): pp. 37-46; repr. in Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," with Postscripts to "Truth in Fiction," in Lewis, *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983), Vol. I, pp. 261-280. All parenthetical page references in the text and notes refer to this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis refers to Terence Parsons, "A Prolegomenon to Meinongian Semantics," *The Journal of Philosophy* 71 (1974): pp. 561-580, and Parsons, "A Meinongian Analysis of Fictional Objects," *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 1 (1975): pp. 73-86. See also Parsons, *Nonexistent Objects* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1980), p. 54: "we don't confuse 'Holmes doesn't exist' with 'According to the story, Holmes doesn't exist'." Parsons considers degenerate fictions that seem to involve nothing but extranuclear (nonconstitutive) predications: "Story: 'Jay exists. The end.' Story: 'An object doesn't exist. The end'" (p. 198). Parsons expresses doubt about whether the examples are genuine stories, and from an aesthetic viewpoint this is perhaps a legitimate concern. But it is hard to see what the passages lack in syntactic or semantic content that would disqualify them as (exceedingly uninteresting) stories.

<sup>3</sup> A more precise and thereby necessarily narrower characterization of the story-telling context, in light of the author's many imitators, and the occurrence of Sherlock Holmes in multiple story-telling contexts, can be written as, "In the stories and novels of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes is a detective." There is, moreover, no obvious reason to limit story-telling context from above or below, allowing more general inclusion of related writings beyond those the author actually composed or even contemplated, such as "In all of world literature at any time now or in the future, Sherlock Holmes is a detective," and more specific and to that extent potentially uninteresting but nevertheless semantically valuable contexting of propositions to the very sentence of a work of fiction in which the proposition is expressed, as in "In the ninth sentence of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, Sherlock Holmes is a detective." See Dale Jacquette, "Intentional Semantics and the Logic of Fiction," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 29 (1989): pp. 168-176; Dale Jacquette, *Meinongian Logic: The Semantics of Existence and Nonexistence* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1996), pp. 256-264; see also Barry Smith, "Ingarden vs. Meinong on the Logic of Fiction," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 (1980): pp. 93-105.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis:

As a first approximation, we might consider exactly those worlds where the plot of the fiction is enacted, where a course of events takes place that matches the story. What is true in the Sherlock Holmes stories would then be what is true at all of those possible worlds where there are characters who have the attributes,

stand in the relations, and do the deeds that are ascribed in the stories to Holmes, Watson, and the rest. (Whether these characters would then *be* Holmes, Watson, and the rest is a vexed question that we must soon consider.) (p. 264)

Lewis provides a more detailed explanation of the modal apparatus for the interpretation of his story-contexting prefixes in his Analyses 0,1,2 [see endnote 9 below].

<sup>5</sup> An account of the unassumability of existence in Meinongian semantics is given by Richard Routley, *Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond*, interim edition (Canberra: Australian National University, 1981), pp. 47-48, 180-187. A useful discussion of related topics appears in Kit Fine, "The Problem of Non-Existents," *Topoi* 1 (1982): pp. 97-140; see also Kit Fine, "Critical Review of Parsons's *Non-Existent Objects*," *Philosophical Studies* 45 (1984): pp. 95-142.

<sup>6</sup> Meinong introduced the distinction between *konstitutatorische* and *ausserkonstitutatorische Bestimmungen* (constitutive and extraconstitutive properties) in *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit: Beiträge zur Gegenstandstheorie und Erkenntnistheorie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1915), repr. *Alexius Meinong Gesamtausgabe*, eight volumes, ed. Rudolf Haller and Rudolf Kindiger in collaboration with Roderick M. Chisholm (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1969-1978), VI, pp. 176-177. Findlay, in *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values* (London: Oxford UP, 1963) proposed the English translations "nuclear" and "extranuclear" (p. 176); see Dale Jacquette, "Nuclear and Extranuclear Properties," *The School of Alexius Meinong*, ed. Liliana Albertazzi, Dale Jacquette, and Roberto Poli (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting," *Mind* 14 (1905); repr. in *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901-1950*, ed. Robert C. Marsh (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1956), p. 45. Russell, "Review of A. Meinong, *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*," *Mind*, 14 (1905), p. 533. Meinong's reply to Russell's problem of the existent round square appears in *Über die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie im System der Wissenschaften* (Leipzig: Voightländer, 1906), pp. 16-17; see also Alexius Meinong, *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit*, pp. 278-282. I critically discuss Meinong's reply to Russell in Jacquette, "Meinong's Doctrine of the Modal Moment," *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 25-26 (1985-1986): pp. 423-438; "A Meinongian Theory of Definite Description," *Axiomathes* 5 (1994): pp. 345-359; see also Dale Jacquette, *Meinongian Logic*, pp. 80-91 [see endnote 3].

<sup>8</sup> If we want to be able to say that Sherlock Holmes is taller than Hercule Poirot, given their absolute heights as described in their separate stories but in no single combined story, then isolating these facts in distinct logically possible worlds does not help. There will of course be a logically possible world in which both characters exist, but these will not be part of any Lewis-style modal analysis of the works of fiction in which Holmes and Poirot are featured. The problem is related to Lewis's counterexample sentence 6. A related criticism of Lewis's story-contexting is discussed by Jonathan Kastin, "The Logic of Fictional Descriptions," *Conference* 4 (1993): pp. 16-30; see also Peter Lamarque, "The Puzzle of the Flash Stockman: A Reply to David Lewis's *Philosophical Papers* and 'Truth in Fiction'," *Analysis* 47 (1987): pp. 93-95. A similar puzzle for Meinongian semantics is discussed by Jacek Pańniczek, *The Logic of Intentional Objects: A Meinongian Version of Classical Logic*, Synthese Library Volume 269 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 165-166. Pańniczek's problem, unlike Lewis's, concerns definitely numbered but intensionally indistinguishable fictional objects, as in a story about ten magic rings. I criticize Pańniczek's analysis in the expanded version of this essay, under the title, "Truth and Fiction in David Lewis's Critique of Meinongian Semantics," *Metaphysica: International Journal for Ontology and Metaphysics* 2 (2001): pp. 73-106, and in Jacquette, Review of Jacek Pańniczek, *The Logic of Intentional Objects: A Meinongian Version of Classical Logic*, in *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 64 (1999): pp. 1847-1849.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis acknowledges the semantic complications entailed by historical fiction:

I have said that truth in fiction is the joint product of two sources: the explicit content of the fiction, and a background consisting either of the facts about our world (Analysis 1) or of the beliefs overt in the community of origin (Analysis 2). Perhaps there is a third source which also contributes: carry-over from other truth in fiction. There are two cases: intra-fictional and inter-fictional” (pp. 273-274)

Lewis’s Analysis 1 and Analysis 2 offer rigorous formulations of modal story-contexting semantics. He explains:

ANALYSIS 1: *A sentence of the form ‘In the fiction f,  $\phi$ ’ is non-vacuously true iff some world where f is told as known fact and  $\phi$  is true differs less from our actual world, on balance, than does any world where f is told as known fact and  $\phi$  is not true. It is vacuously true iff there are no possible worlds where f is told as known fact.”* (p. 270)

ANALYSIS 2: *A sentence of the form ‘In the fiction f,  $\phi$ ’ is non-vacuously true iff, whenever w is one of the collective belief worlds of the community of origin of f, then some world where f is told as known fact and  $\phi$  is true differs less from the world w, on balance, than does any world where f is told as known fact and  $\phi$  is not true. It is vacuously true iff there are no possible worlds where f is told as known fact.”* (p. 273)

Terence Parsons, in *Nonexistent Objects*, similarly distinguishes between “native” and “imported” fictional objects (pp. 51-60, 182-189) [see endnote 2]; see Parsons, “A Prolegomenon to Meinongian Semantics,” pp. 575-577 [see endnote 2], and Parsons, “A Meinongian Analysis of Fictional Objects,” pp. 83-85 [see endnote 2].

<sup>10</sup> See Jacquette, “Modal Meinongian Logic,” *Logique et Analyse* 125-126 (1989): pp. 113-130; Jacquette, *Meinongian Logic*, pp. 149-164. [see endnote 3].

<sup>11</sup> Lewis:

We sometimes speak of *the* world of a fiction. What is true in the Holmes stories is what is true, as we say, “in the world of Sherlock Holmes.” That we speak this way should suggest that it is right to consider less than all the worlds where the plot of the stories is enacted, and less even than all the worlds where the stories are told as known fact [...] But it will not do to follow ordinary language to the extent of supposing that we can somehow single out a single one of the worlds where the stories are told as known fact. Is the world of Sherlock Holmes a world where Holmes has an even or odd number of hairs on his head at the moment when he first meets Watson? What is Inspector Lestrade’s blood type? It is absurd to suppose that these questions about the world of Sherlock Holmes have answers. The best explanation of that is that the worlds of Sherlock Holmes are plural, and the questions have different answers accordingly. If we may assume that some of the worlds where the stories are told as known fact differ least from our world, then these are the worlds of Sherlock Holmes. What is true of throughout them is true in the stories; what is false throughout them is false in the stories; what is true at some and false at others is neither true nor false in the stories. (p. 270)

<sup>12</sup> Lewis writes, in Postscript B in the reprinted version of “Truth in Fiction”:

An inconsistent fiction is not to be treated directly, else everything comes out true in it indiscriminately. But where we have an inconsistent fiction, there also we

have several consistent fictions that may be extracted from it. (Perhaps not in the very hardest cases – but I think those cases are *meant* to defy our efforts to figure out what’s true in the story.) I spoke of the consistent corrections of the original fiction. But perhaps it will be enough to consider *fragments*: corrections by deletion, with nothing written in to replace the deleted bits.  
 (“Impossible Fictions,” *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. I, p. 277)

<sup>13</sup> See Graham Priest’s guest-edited issue of *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 38 (1997), on “Impossible Worlds,” especially contributions by Edwin D. Mares, “Who’s Afraid of Impossible Worlds?” (pp. 516-526); Daniel Nolan, “Impossible Worlds: A Modest Approach” (pp. 535-572); and David A. Van der Laan, “The Ontology of Impossible Worlds” (pp. 597-620). See also Jaakko Hintikka, “Impossible Possible Worlds,” *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 4 (1975): pp. 475-484. In *The Logic of Inconsistency: A Study in Non-Standard Possible-World Semantics and Ontology* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979), Nicholas Rescher and Robert Brandom distinguish between “inconsistent” and “impossible” worlds; see p. 4: “It is necessary to insist [...] that one should avoid speaking of *inconsistent* worlds as *impossible* worlds. This would be question-begging, for it is a prime aim of the present analysis to show that they can be considered as genuinely possible cases.” Rescher and Brandom’s logic is paraconsistent, but it is clear that a Meinongian semantics might interpret the modalities of impossible objects like the round square either by means of impossible or inconsistent worlds.

<sup>14</sup> See *inter alia* Stanislaw Jaskowski, “Propositional Calculus for Contradictory Deductive Systems,” *Studia Logica* 24 (1969): pp. 143-157; N.C.A. da Costa, “On the Theory of Inconsistent Formal Systems,” *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 15 (1974): pp. 497-510. A valuable collection on paraconsistent logic is the extensive volume edited by Graham Priest, Richard Routley, and Jean Norman, *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent* (Munich and Vienna: Philosophia Verlag, 1989); see also Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” *The Sewanee Review* 54 (1946): pp. 3-23.

<sup>16</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, introduction by E.M. Forster (New York: Coward-McCann, 1962).

<sup>17</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* [1739-40], edited by L.A. Selby-Bigge, second edition revised with notes by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), Book I, Part III, Section VII, pp. 97-98.

<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to The Institute for Arts and Humanistic Studies, The Pennsylvania State University, for a Term Fellowship in 1997-1999, which made possible completion of this among related research projects.