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Ontology or Practice? An Ingardenian Examination of Crittenden's *Ficta*

Abstract:

In this article, I analyze Charles Crittenden's account of fictional objects in his *Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects* (1991). I argue that Crittenden's sketchy ontology of fictional objects does not support his weak eliminativism. Going along the lines of Amie Thomasson (1999), I stress that the problem of fictional objects is a strictly ontological problem, which requires an ontological solution. A solution to the problem of fictional objects (or *ficta*) that accommodates "practice" (ordinary language and literary practices) is of course to be praised, but not when it is foregrounded at the expense of "ontology." I argue for Roman Ingarden as a champion of ontology and practice, whose way of dealing with *ficta* fares better than Crittenden's on both the ontological and practical sides. In short, *ficta* should be approached as something over and above mere *grammaticalia* (grammatical objects) namely as "purely intentional" objects that are formally incomplete, and which readers complete by resorting to practices of language and literary criticism.

Keywords:

fictional objects, Roman Ingarden, Charles Crittenden, ontology, ordinary language practices, literary practices

Introduction

The layman reads fiction as something detached from reality.¹ Fictional characters and their stories are accounts of people and events that have never taken place. This seems to be the generally accepted conviction regarding fiction and fictional characters. Literary critics and literary theoreticians delve a bit deeper and analyze various genres of fiction and their being influenced by certain factors outside the textual formation. For instance, a fictional work can be said to be influenced by its author's psychology, life, and/or social background. But seldom is the unreality of fiction and its objects questioned by literary critics. To err on the side of caution, it is usually recommended to stick to the safe and practical characterization of fiction and its objects as being "cultural" products, broadly understood. "Culture" is then employed as an umbrella term that includes various works of art. We are no longer operating on laymen's terms. By treating various works of art as cultural objects, we are drawing an *identity* relation that classes these objects under the "cultural." We are now reckoning with issues within the territory of philosophy. In order to determine if various cultural objects are identical or distinct, we need to engage their *ontology*.² In this article, my primary objective is not to examine if various art (cultural) works are indeed ontologically identical, nor is it to argue for or against the thesis of fictional objects as cultural objects.³ Rather, I will attempt to demonstrate that engaging the ontology of fiction and fictional objects helps us accommodate the layman's discourse about these entities as unreal objects and theoreticians' treatment of these objects along practical lines.

Exemplifying a typical philosophical debate, the problem concerning the existence/being of fictional objects (*ficta*; singular: *fictum*) has divided the philosophical

1) This work is supported with a grant from the National Science Centre, Poland (PRELUDIUM 20, grant nr. 2021/41/N/HS1/00813).

2) This is the approach that the Polish phenomenologist, Roman Ingarden, adopted. He approached various cultural works as being "purely intentional" objects (cf. Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*). For an analysis of Ingarden's ontology of cultural objects (other than the literary work of art), see Thomasson, "Ingarden and Cultural Objects."

3) A well-argued formulation of *ficta* as cultural objects can be found in Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*. Devising Ingarden's general ontology, Thomasson has established a theory of *ficta* as "cultural artifacts," according to which *ficta* share the same ontological status as cultural objects (e.g., flags, money, institutions, etc.), for all these entities involve dependence on consciousness and a material foundation.

community into two main camps: an eliminativist camp that argues against *ficta*'s existence/being, and a non-eliminativist camp that admits *ficta* into our ontology. Generally speaking, eliminativists usually argue against *ficta* on linguistic/semantic grounds,⁴ invoking "ordinary language practices" as the primary reason why such entities should not be admitted into our ontology.⁵ Charles Crittenden is a prominent philosopher who takes this road. In his *Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects*, Crittenden defends a view of *ficta* as mere objects of reference. Although he purports to be concerned with *ficta* considered as non-existent objects, many philosophers make the point that Crittenden's account of *ficta* is essentially lacking in terms of ontological/metaphysical deliberations.⁶ These philosophers (especially Thomasson) take the problem of fictional objects to be, first and foremost, an ontological problem. Therefore, attempting to solve the problem of *ficta* solely on the basis of practice constitutes a methodological flaw.⁷

4) Of course, there are other important reasons behind philosophers' rejection of fictional objects. We can mention worries driven by ontological parsimony, the assertion that our ontology would be better off without *ficta*. Still within the bounds of ontology, there is a prevailing belief that we cannot compellingly argue in favor of the existence/being of fictional objects. Against non-eliminativist theorists of *ficta*, there are concerns about certain undesirable consequences of their theories. Furthermore, we should also mention that many prefer to adhere to eliminativism about *ficta* due to the lack of sufficient arguments for rejecting the well-supported referential theory of language.

5) Hereinafter, "practice" is used to express "ordinary language and literary practices." Crittenden adopts the later Wittgensteinian approach to metaphysics, according to which metaphysical problems are to be dispensed with via ordinary language philosophy (see Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*). Thus, in the context of the controversy over fictional objects, an emphasis is put on everyday language, and how the layman would approach the various problems that *ficta* (seem to) raise. In addition to ordinary language practices thusly characterized, I also take into account literary practices. That is to say, the approach that literary critics and theorists adopt towards fictional objects and fiction.

6) For example, Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, 18–21; Taschek, "Review of *Unreality*"; Cover, "Review of *Unreality*."

7) In Crittenden's defense, fictional objects, provided such objects exist, are directly accessible via linguistic and literary practices. We first acquaint ourselves with fictional objects and their stories via literary works, considering them linguistic constructions. I do not object to treating fictional objects as being products of language. I object to approaching the problem of fictional objects *solely* from the standpoint of practice. While *ficta* are directly accessible via practice, their being and determinations transcend the practices via which they are presented. As I will show later on, *ficta*'s problem is fundamentally an ontological problem that goes well beyond issues of practice. Considerations of practice can corroborate ontological considerations, and *vice versa*. However, the latter should not be discarded in favor of the former. Otherwise, we would wind up with a rather superficial view of *ficta* that is detached from their ontological foundations.

In order to make manifest the fruits of treating ontology and practice as complimentary parts within a cohesive whole, I will invoke a philosophical figure whose contributions to metaphysics and ontology have largely gone under the radar: Roman Ingarden. Ingarden was a dear and critical student of Edmund Husserl's in Göttingen between 1912 and 1915. Nowadays, Ingarden's brilliance is, for the most part, appreciated in fields related to literary theory and aesthetics, broadly construed. The fact that he was fundamentally concerned with purely philosophical issues (such as the ontological problems of the realism-idealism debate) is often put aside.⁸ Having said that, there are reasons for optimism as Ingarden's purely philosophical significance is now being explored. One of the contexts within which Ingarden's brilliance is being explored is fictional objects and the problem of their (possible) being. Contemporary analytic philosophers such as Thomasson and Barry Smith have not only defended Ingarden's account but also built their own approaches to *ficta* around Ingarden's ontology.⁹ In an attempt to highlight Ingarden's relevance to the *ficta* debate within analytic philosophy, I will critically compare his account with that of Crittenden.

Since the problem of fictional objects is primarily an ontological one, we need to first determine the ontological status of these objects, then we can proceed to issues of practice. Notably, Ingarden's approach respects both ontological deliberations and practice which, if brought about in the right way, should be taken to be key in solving the problem of *ficta*. In this article, I will compare Crittenden's and Ingarden's approaches to *ficta*, taking both ontology and practice into account. I will argue that Ingarden's account of *ficta* as purely intentional objects better accounts, ontologically and practically, for our reference to *ficta*. With this objective in mind, I divide

8) I analyze Ingarden's aesthetic deliberations in relation to his philosophical break up with Husserl over the latter's turn to transcendental idealism in Jakha, "Ingarden against Husserl." For more on Ingarden's ontology and aesthetics, see Mitscherling, *Ingarden's Ontology and Aesthetics*.

9) See, for example, Smith, "Ingarden vs. Meinong." Prior to her *Fiction and Metaphysics*, Thomasson had defended Ingarden's theory of imagination, which accounts for the generation of fictional objects, against Husserl's. Thomasson, "Fiction and Intentionality," argues that Ingarden's "intentional object theory," *contra* Husserl's "content theory," better accounts for fictional entities as objects of our imaginative faculties. See Plotka, "Controversy Over Fictional Objects," for a detailed investigation of Ingarden's and Husserl's philosophies of imagination and their adequacy with respect to the generation of fictional entities. In addition, Smith, "Ontological Foundations," has also applied Ingarden's ontology of the literary work of art to certain problems within literary theory, arguing for the importance of Ingarden's deliberations to contemporary literary issues.

my article as follows. First, I start with a detailed exposition of Crittenden's account of fictional objects as it is formulated in his *Unreality* (I). Next, in my examination of Crittenden's *ficta* (II), I present and defend the Ingardenian view of *ficta* as purely intentional objects on two grounds: ontology (A) and practice (B).

I. Crittenden's *Ficta*

According to Crittenden, fictional objects are basically objects of reference. His account of reference is inspired by Strawson's "identifying references."¹⁰ Strawson writes in this regard:

Among the kinds of expressions which we, as speakers, use to make references to particulars are some of which a standard function is, in the circumstances of their use, to enable a hearer to identify the particular which is being referred to. Expressions of these kinds include some proper names, some pronouns, some descriptive phrases beginning with the definite article, and expressions compounded of these.¹¹

Crittenden, therefore, approaches reference as whatever/whomever we are talking about. In identifying a reference, a speaker "singles out" the object they want to talk about.¹² A successful identifying reference is taken to fulfill the following criteria:

- (i) The speaker *S* has an object in mind and has the intention of directing the attention of the audience *A* to this object.
- (ii) To carry out this intention, *S* utters (speaks, writes, etc.) in an appropriate context an expression whose standard function in the language is to execute such intentions.
- (iii) *S* further intends that *A* recognize *S*'s prior intention on the basis of this utterance.¹³

10) Searle's "Reference as a Speech Act" also plays a central role in shaping Crittenden's theory.

11) Strawson, *Individuals*, 16.

12) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 32. Compare Strawson, "On Referring," 17.

13) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 33.

But should this object be present, or are objects dispensable in reference?¹⁴ To answer this question, Crittenden compares his speech act theory with the causal theory of reference. Proponents of this theory argue that a proper name refers to an object by virtue of a causal, historical link obtaining between the name and the object referred to. We are able to talk about the success of reference precisely because of this link between name and object, thus we can neglect whether the object referred to is picked out by a set of descriptions.¹⁵ The demerits of the causal theory are made manifest when we consider the case of *ficta*. Following Russell, fictional names were classified as “non-denoting,” for they do not denote existing *realia*. This is congenial for advocates of the causal theory because we cannot have a historical baptism of a fictional (empty) name as being applied to an individual, which would mark a causal link. The same argument causal theorists devise to undermine reference to *ficta* can be used against them. To elaborate, in fiction, we have fictional names that are attributed to *ficta* without the historical requirement being fulfilled. Given that *ficta* are non-existent, the causal theory of reference is undermined. Crittenden’s alternative is a reference account embedded in Searle’s speech act theory. The presence of an object, therefore, is a “conceptual requirement,” which means that some *referent*

14) As I understand it, objects’ presentness can be construed in terms of their metaphysical realness. Naturally, for reference to take shape, a metaphysically real object must be present. However, as will be laid out shortly, Crittenden admits (unreal) *ficta* as objects of reference, too, labeling his move a “conceptual requirement.” This means that we cannot equate being a reference object and being real. Therefore, *ficta*’s being present can be explained as being pseudo-present, since their presence is founded in metaphysical unreality, a position postulated by Crittenden primarily to accommodate reference’s conceptual requirement.

15) Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, and Putnam, “The Meaning of ‘Meaning,’” are notable advocates of the causal theory of reference, broadly understood. Mapping out the theory, Kripke writes:

For species, as for proper names, the way the reference of a term is fixed should not be regarded as a synonym for the term. In the case of proper names, the reference can be fixed in various ways. In an initial baptism it is typically fixed by an ostension or a description. Otherwise, the reference is usually determined by a chain, passing the name from link to link. The same observations hold for such a general term as “gold.” If we imagine a hypothetical (admittedly somewhat artificial) baptism of the substance, we must imagine it picked out as by some such “definition” as, “Gold is the substance instantiated by the items over there, or at any rate, by almost all of them.” ... I believe that in general, terms for natural kinds (e.g., animal, vegetable and chemical kinds) get their reference fixed in this way; the substance is defined as the kind instantiated by (almost all of) a given sample. (*Naming and Necessity*, 135–36)

One of the main concerns raised against this theory appertains to its ability to plausibly deal with single words rather than names (compare Unger, “The Causal Theory”).

must be present for reference to take place. To use Quinean terminology, a possible referent is an object that adheres to the “whole distinctively objectificatory apparatus of our language.”¹⁶ That is to say, for some object to be regarded as a referent, identity and enumeration criteria must be applicable to it. There should be no difficulties in determining whether the same object or something like it is present, or the number of such objects. “More broadly, the notions of *referring*, predicating an *attribute* of something, and the *truth* or *falsity* of the resulting *statement* are conceptually related.”¹⁷ In the account of language provided by Crittenden, objects are constituted by “(at least some) associated criteria of identity and enumeration and are bearers of properties, thus making them possible subjects of true/false (warranted/unwarranted) claims, are truths of this kind.”¹⁸

It is important to note that, according to Crittenden, being an object of reference does not equal being existent. Going along the lines of Reid,¹⁹ Crittenden posits that we can talk about and refer to non-existent entities without worrying about their existential status. Let us test the applicability of the latter to *ficta* with the following example:

(1) Sherlock Holmes smokes a pipe;

Treating (1) as entailing that speaker S has something specific in mind when using the name “Sherlock Holmes” is not particularly controversial. It is equally unproblematic to state that speaker S wishes to draw audience A’s attention to a specific entity with the use of the fictional name. Therefore, it is safe to say that the referent of the name used in (1) that S wishes to speak about is Sherlock, the fictional detective. As far as our ordinary language practices are concerned, it is natural to treat (1) as being true. Moreover, we can establish identity criteria for Sherlock which, as stated above, are criteria that distinguish objects of reference: namely identity and enumeration criteria. Sherlock of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is the same character throughout, and he is identical with the main protagonist of *The Sign of the Four*. Sherlock is also different

16) Quine, *Word and Object*, 236.

17) Original italics. Compare Crittenden, “Transcendental Arguments”; Quine, *Ontological Relativity*, 8–9.

18) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 36–40. These criteria are not made specific in his book.

19) Compare Reid, *Intellectual Powers of Man*, 409.

from other characters; for example, he is different from Dr. Watson or Inspector Lestrade. In light of these considerations, it is natural to conceive of authors as referring to specific *ficta* when they use certain names or descriptions. The criteria we find inside a work of fiction are not the only relevant criteria for *ficta*. For instance, between July 1891 and January 1905, stories with the names and descriptions of Conan Doyle's *ficta* were published in *The Strand*. This further strengthens the identity of Sherlock. Nonetheless, accepting (1) should not prompt us to disregard another crucial claim concerning *ficta*, namely:

(2) Sherlock Holmes did not exist;²⁰

The truth of this claim is certain. Sherlock can serve as the referent of both (1) and (2). The fictional entity that is described in (1) as smoking a pipe is the same entity that, in (2), is said to not have existed. These claims are all true and do not pose any challenge to our ordinary language practices.²¹

The status of *ficta* as conceptual entities calls for a more concentrated analysis. Crittenden takes *ficta* to be products of storytelling operations. According to him, authors and storytellers use language in a certain way, and their operations bring about *ficta*.²² In no way does this entail that *ficta* exist or have any sort of reality. The

20) Negative existential statements, as used by *ficta* eliminativists, are a peculiar case. On the one hand, they seem to commit us to the thing we wish to deny, namely Sherlock. This is what we find in the Russell of *The Principles of Mathematics* (compare, 449). On the other hand, they seem to present a given, namely that Sherlock never existed. Instead of following the earlier Russell's Meinongian path, Sainsbury formulates the so-called "negative free logic" approach, according to which negative existential statements involving *ficta* are true, without being ontologically committed to these entities, as is inescapably the case when we use classical logic (compare Sainsbury, *Fiction and Fictionalism*, 40 and 48). This approach is in line with Crittenden's project.

21) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 41–44.

22) A similar approach can be found in van Inwagen, "Creatures of Fiction," who treats *ficta* as "theoretical entities of literary criticism." These entities are there to help us understand what we are discussing when we are reading or analyzing fiction (303). Crittenden would not say his theory is similar to van Inwagen's. As he argues, "one feel[s] that van Inwagen has not really gotten at ordinary thinking about fiction... His views conflict with common belief." Crittenden, *Unreality*, 110–11. Nonetheless, Cover, "Review of *Unreality*," believes Crittenden's criticism of van Inwagen is more like "his theory isn't mine" than it being anything else (228). It is worth noting that van Inwagen and Crittenden are also different in an important respect; the former is usually regarded as an artifactualist (see, e.g., van Inwagen, "Fiction

non-existence of *ficta* is a “logical truth,” which anyone concerned about our ordinary language practices should preserve. Remaining within the boundaries of logic, Crittenden devises his conceptual theory to establish two main components in fiction: “the absolute classification fictions have *qua* fictions,” and a participant’s perspective within fiction. So, even though Sherlock is a non-existent *fictum* from our perspective, he is very much alive from Dr. Watson’s standpoint. To consolidate his claim, Crittenden invokes Meinong’s *Sein/Sosein* distinction, putting forth a view of fictions as possessing only *Sosein*. To illustrate how *ficta* can be referents, Crittenden borrows Anscombe’s conception of the direct object of a sentence. To be more explicit, according to Anscombe, in “John sent Mary a book,” the direct object is a book, according to an older usage. In a later usage, “a book” is the direct object of the sentence. Crittenden leans more towards the older usage, for, through it, we can talk about the object of a sentence without presupposing its existence. This is what we find in Anscombe, arguing that “it is evident nonsense to ask about the mode of existence or ontological status of the direct object as such.”²³ Building on this, Crittenden argues:

A direct object is introduced purely through the production of a grammatically acceptable sentence of a certain kind, and grammatical considerations alone, not reality, determine what is a direct object. Here we have just what Meinong called attention to, objects of thought and judgment lacking *sein*.

Ficta, Crittenden proceeds, are no different. They too are introduced purely through grammatical operations. “There are such objects solely in the sense that they have been written about and thereby become available for thought or reference.” Fictional entities, therefore, are “mere referents,” beyond which nothing exists.²⁴ In saying that an author has created a fictional object *x*, we simply mean that they have linguistically constructed propositions involving references to *x*, with *x* (and every other *ficta*

and Metaphysics”, and “Existence and Fictional Entities”), hence a non-eliminativist, and Crittenden is, of course, an eliminativist.

23) Anscombe, “Intentionality of Sensation,” 11.

24) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 62–65.

created by the author) having no existential standing on its own. These propositions do not report anything, for their mere function is to create *ficta*. Because they do not report anything factually, truth values cannot be applied to these propositions.²⁵

Crittenden's claim that fictional objects are mere referents is not easy to digest. Reference is, first and foremost, a relation between a "word" and a "thing," with the thing usually enjoying a real existential status. But how could a word and a thing be related if the thing does not exist? There are philosophers who reject reference to *ficta*. For instance, Urmson argues that authors' sentence-constructing operations that bring about *ficta* do not refer to these entities. "What I am saying is that making up a fiction is not a case of stating, or asserting, or propounding a proposition and includes no acts such as referring," writes Urmson.²⁶ Crittenden, however, stands firm by his position and defends reference to *ficta*. Doing away with reference on the ground that fictional propositions present an imaginary situation lacks support. Although one may feel tempted to deny reference to *ficta* in certain cases,²⁷ once the world of *ficta* has been well represented, readers find reference to *ficta* unproblematic. Only those with "extreme theoretical commitments" can deny reference to *ficta* in well represented fictional worlds.²⁸ Philosophers who reject reference to *ficta* usually do so with regards to the "inside" statements. That is, statements that purport to report something according to the story's contents. The truth conditions of such statements are the "sayso" of the story.²⁹ For instance, it is true according to the story that Sherlock smokes a pipe. But there are also statements about *ficta* that are not exhausted by the story's contents. These statements are "outside" statements. The truth conditions of such statements cannot be the sayso of the fiction, but rather "empirical reality." In other words, the truth conditions of these statements lie outside of the story's contents. An example of the latter would be "Sherlock was created by Conan Doyle." It is these statements that reference-denying philosophers find challenging. Most philosophers who deny refer-

25) Ibid., 90–91.

26) Urmson, "Fiction," 155.

27) For example, in cases where the reader is being introduced to a fictional character for the first time. But even in such cases, we can still refer to *ficta*, Crittenden argues. He takes the referring act to both introduce the *fictum* and call the reader's attention to it (Crittenden, *Unreality*, 93).

28) Ibid., 92–93.

29) This is the terminology of Woods, *The Logic of Fiction*.

ence to *ficta* based on inside statements permit it for outside statements.³⁰ Crittenden, therefore, distinguishes among the following:

There are then three kinds of locution to be kept separate: those appearing in the narrative itself and functioning to construct the fictional situation, those purporting to report the contents of a situation so set out, and those about some item in a fiction but attributing to it some property external to the work itself.³¹

Crittenden's reference account also explores *ficta*'s "logical incompleteness." *Contra* Parsons and others, Crittenden defends the logical completeness of fictional objects.³² Logical completeness can be formulated as follows:

An object x is complete if it is logically true that, for any property P , either x has P (" x is P " is true) or x has the complement of P (" x is non- P " is true).³³

With regards to *ficta*, a fictional entity x has the properties a certain fiction's contents attribute to it: "a character has those properties he is explicitly mentioned as having or can readily be inferred to have from textual information." But an author can only go so far in describing a *fictum*. They are bound to leave many aspects of *ficta* undescribed. "It follows that for an unaddressed property the character neither has it nor lacks it; hence this character is incomplete with respect to such a feature." For example, we cannot know whether Sherlock has a mole on his shoulder, for Conan Doyle was silent about this aspect of Sherlock. It is safe to say, therefore, that *ficta* are "gappy" entities.³⁴ With that said, Crittenden does not believe *ficta* are logically incomplete. To support his thesis, he explores various considerations. One of

30) For more on this, see Urmson, "Fiction," 155.

31) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 93–95.

32) In this regard, Parsons writes: "A character created in a piece of fiction is typically incomplete, whereas real people are complete. This seems to be the accepted view in the literature." Parsons, *Nonexistent Objects*, 184.

33) A formulation along these lines can be found in Lambert, *Principle of Independence*, 26.

34) Compare Parsons, *Nonexistent Objects*, 183–84.

them revolves around *ficta*'s conceptual status. Crittenden maintains that *ficta* are governed by the same logical principles that govern real entities. Inside the fiction, Watson does not see Sherlock as incomplete. Watson can tell whether Sherlock has a mole on his shoulder or not. Treating Sherlock as neither possessing nor failing to possess a mole on his shoulder would constitute a conceptually odd figure; certainly not the figure of the genius detective we all know. "To make Holmes incomplete *in the story*, then, would render him conceptually unsuitable for the role of a character in ordinary narrative fiction." Inside the story, Sherlock is supposed to be a real entity, and for that he is logically complete. To clearly see *ficta*'s completeness, a comparison with genuinely incomplete objects would be helpful. *Ex hypothesi*, the Meinongian golden mountain is only endowed with two properties, that of *being golden* and that of *being a mountain*, hence it is incomplete with respect to any other property. Turned into a *fictum*, this is all we can say about the object: "Once upon a time there was a golden mountain." We cannot add anything to its property set, for that would infringe the property restriction requirement. This is opposed to how fiction is normally written. There is no requirement to restrict properties in fiction. Therefore, fictional objects are to be distinguished from incomplete objects. *Ficta* obey the following principle:

(A) In the story x is P or non- P ;

If this is not the principle that *ficta* disobey, then what is it? Crittenden believes that *ficta* disobey principle (B), not (A):

(B) In a story x is indicated to be P or in the story x is indicated to be non- P ,³⁵

When incompleteness is raised, it is (B) that is the topic of controversy, not the logical principles inside a story. Accordingly, (B) is false because we can have countless properties that *ficta* neither possess nor fail to possess in a fiction. But how can we have *ficta* that obey (A) and disobey (B)? Crittenden approaches this difficulty as follows:

35) With "indicates" meaning "explicitly states or clearly implies." Crittenden, *Unreality*, 141.

This perplexity is resolved once it is realized that the creation of characters in realistic fiction is done against a background of historical fact and logical assumption. We read a novel with the presumption that lifelike individuals are being described; the personal attributes, situation, and events ascribed to them are to be regarded as indicative of the general situation in which they are to be located.³⁶

Put differently, readers are supposed to import normality principles into fiction.³⁷ Nonetheless, many philosophers maintain their allegiance to logical incompleteness.³⁸ One of the main arguments they raise in support of their position takes the nature of the analyzed representations to be key in determining whether we ought to ask for more details. Crittenden invites us to consider the following:

Consider George Washington as portrayed on the U.S. twenty-five-cent piece. It would be ridiculous to ask what kind of shoes he is wearing, yet this situation is logically on a par with Holmes's mole, since in both cases there is a character defined to a certain extent only (the differences in medium do not matter for logical purposes) and what is logically absurd in the one case is absurd in the other. So, the objection concludes, as George Washington is incomplete with respect to footwear, Holmes is with respect to moles.

Crittenden's answer to this argument is that, although there is no difference between literary and pictorial representations, there are different logical terms at issue in realistic fiction and portraiture on a coin:

36) Realistic fiction is a key term. Whether unrealistic fiction adheres to logical completeness is another issue. It can be argued that disobeying logical completeness is a characterizing feature of unrealistic fiction.

37) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 139–43. I think we should not, however, extend the role of “reader” to just about anyone. I would rather propose something like what Ingarden and Thomasson, for example, suggested, namely relying on “competent readers” to fill the gaps in fiction.

38) Crittenden here refers mainly to Meinongianism. A prominent neo-Meinongian who subscribes to *ficta*'s incompleteness, whom Crittenden invokes in the context of incompleteness, is Parsons, *Nonexistent Objects*.

The face of a national hero on a coin is intended chiefly to honor the hero and to recall his importance to the country. It is not intended to depict a factual situation into which a viewer is imaginatively to enter, and where there are other details to be wondered about and possibly filled in by some historical situation taken as background.

To conclude this Section, Crittenden's thesis in defense of logical completeness is that, although they are incomplete with regards to (B), *ficta* are logically complete with regards to (A).³⁹

II. An Ingardenian Examination

Following my exposition of his theory of *ficta* as referents, it is time to put forth my Ingardenian examination of Crittenden's arguments. As stated in my introduction, ontology and practice are key criteria in solving the issue of *ficta*. Accordingly, this is the general outline that I will be adopting in this Section. First, I will start by examining the question of ontology (A) in both Crittenden and Ingarden, then proceed to practice (B).

(A) Ontology

As Thomasson rightly argues, Crittenden leans more towards language practices in discussing *ficta* and disregards their ontological side. Crittenden allows practice to dictate what is true/false about *ficta* by tracing the truth value of propositions containing these entities to "accepted practices." Practice should be devised to better understand *ficta*, not to let it wholly constitute the truths/falsehoods of the propositions denoting *ficta*. Relying on practice alone, we could be wrong about many aspects of *ficta*. For instance, we may think that two characters are identical when in effect they are not, or we may mistakenly attribute some properties to *ficta* that do not belong to

39) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 143–48.

them.⁴⁰ Moreover, we appeal to many aspects that go beyond our practices to determine criteria of *ficta*'s identity and properties. For example, we can appeal to a *fictum*'s origin. Crittenden himself concedes the role the history of a work of fiction plays in determining a *fictum*'s identity. It also seems that we cannot treat *ficta* as mere objects of reference if we want our discourse about them to be true or false. Therefore, these considerations demonstrate that an ontological analysis of *ficta* is indispensable.⁴¹

While I agree with Thomasson's argument overall, I do not condone treating Crittenden's account of *ficta* as being totally devoid of ontological deliberations. He clearly approaches *ficta* as *unrealia*, objects that do not have any sort of reality whatsoever. For all intents and purposes, this is an ontological judgement. The problem with Crittenden's ontology of *ficta* is that, besides its being narrow with regards to scope and application, it does not really align with his general theory. Put differently, Crittenden's ontology/metaphysics does not support his theory of *ficta* as referents. To begin with, Crittenden argues that although we may see Sherlock as non-existent, Watson, a fellow *fictum*, sees him as existent. To back this double sidedness, he invokes Meinong's *Sein/Sosein* distinction. So, albeit lacking *Sein*, *ficta* possess *Sosein*. I find this odd, for Meinong is a vehement non-eliminativist about *ficta*. Meinong conceives of *ficta* as non-existent entities,

40) To be more concrete, we can invoke here Jorge Luis Borges's intriguing mental exercise. Borges invites us to imagine a case where Cervantes's classic *Don Quixote* is rewritten, word for word, by Pierre Menard. Beyond the framework of Borges's original formulation, we can further postulate that the two writers, Cervantes and Menard, are not acquainted with each other. To make it even more interesting, let it be that (prior to, during, and after finishing his text) Menard had no knowledge of Cervantes's text. Relying solely on practice, it might be argued that Don Quixote in both Cervantes's and Menard's texts is one and the same *fictum*, for these texts are syntactically identical. Turning to ontology, it becomes clear that, albeit being identical, the two texts are distinct, for they are created following two distinct intentional acts. Therefore, following especially the principle of *ficta*'s rigid historical dependence on authorial intentionality (compare Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, 56), Cervantes's Don Quixote and Menard's Don Quixote are two distinct *ficta*.

The Cervantes-Menard problem has been characterized by Voltolini, *How Ficta Follow Fiction*, as the "many-*ficta*" problem. In other words, if we abstract Cervantes's and Menard's descriptions of Don Quixote, we obtain one property set that picks out two *ficta* (32–33). This has compelled Voltolini to conceive of *ficta* as being comprised of something over and above being constituted by a set of properties (which he approaches as a necessary but not sufficient condition for *ficta*'s individuation). According to Voltolini, what signifies *ficta*'s going over and above having a certain property set is their being constituted via a make-believe process-type. Together with having a property set (set-theoretical), the obtaining of a make-believe process-type (pretense-theoretical) guarantees *ficta*'s necessary and sufficient identity conditions (80).

41) Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, 19–20.

occupying a domain wider in extension than “existence,” but still within the domain of “being.” We find a similar formulation later on page 65, where Crittenden likens a sentence’s direct object being determined by grammatical considerations to Meinong’s objects of thought and judgement lacking *Sein*. Here, again, Crittenden seems to have neglected Meinong’s overarching theory of objects. Objects of thought and judgment do indeed lack *Sein*, but they are still postulated within the wider domain of “being.”⁴² Plus, Meinong would not reduce non-existent objects to their grammar. For him, non-existent objects are independent of both “language” and “thought.”⁴³ To be fair to Crittenden, Meinong can also be regarded as an eliminativist of some sort, insofar as he eliminates *ficta*’s *Sein* and admits their *Sosein*. However, it is important to note that while Crittenden invokes *ficta*’s *Sosein* to ontologically eliminate fictional objects, Meinong utilizes the principle of *ficta*’s *Sosein* independence from *Sein* to ontologically accommodate these entities. So, Crittenden’s characterization of *ficta* as being devoid of any sort of reality whatsoever⁴⁴ is not on a par with Meinong’s determination of *ficta* as *außerseiende* entities that are endowed with an independent *Sosein*. Thus, Crittenden’s attempt to devise Meinong’s theory of objects to strengthen his own eliminativism about *ficta* seems to have misfired, as it makes it even weaker. Had he referred to Meinong’s earlier account of *ficta*, where he clearly puts forth a pretense – hence eliminativist – theory of *ficta* and fiction,⁴⁵ Crittenden’s appeal to Meinong to back his eliminativism would have more pertinence. But as things stand, Crittenden neither fully commits to *ficta*’s being (the later Meinong) nor concedes pretense about *ficta* (the earlier Meinong). By and large, if *ficta* and fiction lack *Sein* but possess *Sosein*, that puts Crittenden’s theory in the same category as Meinong’s non-eliminativism.⁴⁶ I do not think, however, that Crittenden would want to adopt Meinongianism about *ficta*, largely because of the latter’s logical issues.⁴⁷ Ingarden’s ontology, I argue, is better suited to accommodate Crittenden’s *ficta*.

42) Compare Meinong, “The Theory of Objects.”

43) Compare Meinong, “Über Inhalt Und Gegenstand,” 153–54; and “Über Annahmen,” 27. For more on this, see Voltolini, *How Ficta Follow Fiction*, 7–10.

44) Compare *Unreality*, 69.

45) Compare Kroon, “Was Meinong Pretending?”

46) Or partial eliminativism, if one takes Meinong to be a partial eliminativist.

47) As explored in the previous Section, Crittenden contrasts *ficta* with Meinongian incomplete entities, treating the latter as being genuinely incomplete and *ficta* as being logically complete.

According to Ingarden, *ficta* are “purely intentional” entities.⁴⁸ They are, first and foremost, *heteronomous* entities that do not have the fundament for their being in themselves.⁴⁹ The fundament for their being is found in the *autonomous* creative acts of authors.⁵⁰ That is to say, when, for example, Scott Fitzgerald created (and so brought to being) Jay Gatsby, the *fictum*’s coming into being is explainable only in reference to its author’s creative acts. It is Fitzgerald who created Gatsby, and it is only logical that we refer to Fitzgerald’s authorial acts to account for Gatsby’s creation. Take away Fitzgerald’s creative acts, and there would be no Gatsby to begin with. Authors’ creative acts are autonomous because they have the fundament for their being in themselves; that is, they do not depend on other entities for their own being.⁵¹ Unlike Gatsby’s,

48) Purely intentional objects are not to be confounded with “intentional objects.” It is common practice in phenomenology to treat ordinary (real) objects as being intentional objects as well, in the sense that an intentional act is directed at an object *X*. *X* has an independent ontic status, and its being intentionally grasped as being *y*, for example, does not entail that *X*’s essence and attributes are dependent on the intentional acts that grasp it. These acts’ sole purpose is to draw our attention to an independently constituted object. There is an object *X* regardless of whether it is the object of an intentional act. Purely intentional objects, by contrast, are wholly dependent on intentional acts for their existence. Both their essence and attributes are merely intended, and for that they require an intending subject. Unlike *X*, a purely intentional object *Z*, even with the presence of an intentional act, can never be real.

49) Ingarden, *Controversy I*, 113. “Heteronomy” is an Ingardenian existential moment that distinguishes purely intentional objects. These objects are not an “utter nothing.” They simply lack an essence of their own. Unlike “autonomous” objects, purely intentional objects’ immanence is not contained within themselves. “All of the material attributes appearing in its content, as well as the formal and even existential moments, are merely ‘allotted’ to it, ‘intended,’ but not ‘embodied’ [*verkörpert*] in it in the genuine sense” (Ibid., 115).

50) To better understand “autonomy,” consider the ideal quality of “redness in itself.” To say that Redness has its existential foundation within itself means that “*in itself it is through and through* what it is, [in the sense] that it is *determined* by something which is wholly *contained* within itself, indeed, by what it *itself is*” (original italics). Objects, too, can be autonomous if they wholly contain within themselves the concretization of Redness. In general, objects can be autonomous if their attributes are wholly immanent to them. “Where this immanence is lacking, the respective entity cannot be autonomous, and is for this very reason heteronomous – insofar as it exists at all” (Ibid., 111–12).

51) Compare *ibid.*, 109–10. This is not to reduce autonomy to “independence.” Notwithstanding, the two existential moments are admissible pairings under Ingarden’s *Relative Being* (compare *ibid.*, 156). Let me elaborate. Ingarden made a distinction between “dependence”/“independence” and “inseparability”/“separability.” The latter is Piwowarczyk’s terminology (see Piwowarczyk, “The Ingardenian Distinction”). The terminology used in Szylewicz’s translation of Ingarden’s *Controversy* is “non-self-sufficiency”/“self-sufficiency” (German: *Unselbständigkeit/Selbständigkeit*; Polish: *niesamodzielność/samodzielność*). I personally prefer Piwowarczyk’s, for, as he explains, “Ingarden wanted to emphasize that unselbständig entities can exist only within a whole,” hence “inseparability” seems to be more fitting. (Ibid., 534)

the existence of Fitzgerald's creative acts does not depend on the existence of other (external) entities. His creative acts certainly do not depend for their existence on the existence of Gatsby. If we take away Gatsby, there would still be Fitzgerald's creative acts. Therefore, we can characterize the dependence relation that obtains between creative acts and *ficta* as being one-sided, for the dependence only goes one way.⁵²

So far, no problem. Crittenden would not find this formulation problematic. As he notes in his *Unreality*, all mere referents are intentional objects. An intentional object, however, can fail to become a grammatical object if there is no sentence about it.⁵³ But, if he takes all mere referents to be intentional objects, why restrict them to grammatical objects? When we refer to some object, our intentional acts are directed at that object. When we refer to a *fictum*, we do not just refer to a set

A separable entity, Ingarden posits, is one that, in accord with its essence, does not require the being of some other entity, with which it would have to co-exist within the unity of some whole. An inseparable entity, by contrast, is one that does require such a necessary co-existence. For example, the moment "redness" is inseparable with regards to "coloration," for "red color" and "coloration" must co-exist within the unity of a whole (Ingarden, *Controversy I*, 147). In the domain of separable entities, we can still distinguish the following. A separable entity can be existentially dependent if it requires for its "continued subsistence" (*Fortbestehen*) the existence of some other separable entity. On the other hand, a separable entity is independent if it does not require the existence of any other separable entity for its subsistence. From this it follows that independence is greater in effect than separability. (Ibid., 153)

For an analysis of Ingarden's existential moments and modes of being, see Simons, "Ontology of Dependence"; Chrudzimski, "Modes of Being." For an examination of Ingarden's distinction between "inseparability" and "dependence," see Piwowarczyk, "The Ingardenian Distinction."

52) In Thomasson's terminology (Compare *Fiction and Metaphysics*, 35–36), the dependence relation that obtains between Fitzgerald's creative acts and Gatsby is one of historical dependence, for the former's existence historically precedes the latter's. The fact that Gatsby's existence is particularly dependent on Fitzgerald's creative acts and nobody else's hints towards a distinct dependence relation. This is what Thomasson refers to as "rigid historical dependence." Following its being conceptualized and so generated via Fitzgerald's creative acts, Gatsby's subsistence is partly passed on to the literary work(s) in which he is featured. Gatsby does not necessarily need a specific work in order to maintain his subsistence past Fitzgerald's creative acts. Gatsby can subsist as long as there is some work (any work) that hosts his determinations. Thomasson labels this variant of dependence "generic constant dependence." This dependence is generic, for there is no requirement for Gatsby to depend on a specific work for his subsistence. The constancy of Gatsby's dependence on some work is necessary, for his subsistence can only be guaranteed as long as there is some work hosting his determinations.

53) Crittenden, *Unreality*, 66, footnote 11. In the context of fictional utterances, Crittenden conceives of *intentionalia* as objects of thought, which do not exist, hence appears to advocate a view along the lines of pure *intentionalia*. It is not clear if he would also accept real objects as being intentional, which would mean that he makes room for a view of *intentionalia* (minus the "pure"). Refer to footnote 48.

of sentences constructed in a certain way. We refer to an entity that is described by language in a certain way. The propositions that construct the *fictum* are themselves purely intentional, as Ingarden would put it.⁵⁴ As an ontological rule, we cannot support the being of a heteronomous entity with another heteronomous entity. Eventually, there has to be an autonomous entity that grounds the being of *ficta*, and that is the creative acts of authors and competent readers, who can make sense of the sentences that construct *ficta*.⁵⁵ Crittenden fails to adhere to this rule by regarding the heteronomous sentences that construct *ficta* to support whatever form of being he ascribes to them. Sentences can (and do) take over the role of supporting *ficta*'s status, but they can only do so derivatively. That is, "the immediate existential foundation of an heteronomous entity need not necessarily lie in an autonomous entity." In a literary work, sentence-forming operations give rise to sentence meanings, which then determine the fiction's objects. So, while *ficta*'s determination is immediately dependent on sentence-forming operations, it is ultimately dependent on an author's creative acts.⁵⁶ To put it in simpler terms, Gatsby's being a *nouveau riche* is immediately founded on the sentences of Fitzgerald's novel, as it is these sentences that we can immediately access when we pick up the novel. But these sentences, and the novel as a whole, were not created *ex nihilo*. These sentences are the product of an intentional creative act initiated and completed by Fitzgerald. Consequently, Gatsby's being a *nouveau riche* is ultimately founded upon the creative acts of Fitzgerald, restricting the role of the novel's grammar to that of mediation.

54) Indeed, Ingarden argues that a fiction's sentences are purely intentional. On the one hand, sentences are the products of an author's intentional acts (this is their "source"). On the other hand, sentences have their "basis" in ideal concepts and their meaning (Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 361). Ingarden proceeds to lay out two senses of "foundation" that apply to fictional objects. On the "immediate" level, *ficta*'s foundation lies in the sentences and propositions of their works. This is where Crittenden draws the line. However, Ingarden delves deeper and formulates the second sense of *ficta*'s foundation, which lies in sentences' immediate existential foundation in authorial intentionality (compare *Controversy I*, 117). The fact that language carries, so to speak, *ficta*'s determinations has led Ingarden to postulate, besides authorial intentionality, language's "borrowed intentionality," for a text's language borrows the author's intentionality. Linguistic intentionality is especially important in explaining the intersubjective nature of literary works (compare Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 125–26).

55) Compare Ingarden, *Controversy I*, 117.

56) *Ibid.*, 116–17.

To further pinpoint the inadequacy of ontologically grounding *ficta* in grammar, let us consider another Ingardenian argument found in his *Controversy II*.⁵⁷ Sentences that comprise fictions do not immediately present fictional objects, but rather “states of affairs,” which then present these objects.⁵⁸ Following Crittenden, when we refer to *ficta* as grammatical objects, we are merely referring to states of affairs, since sentences alone cannot produce fictional objects. Isolating the sentences that describe *ficta* from their ontological underpinnings only results in *ficta* that are even weirder than non-existent *ficta*, leaving us with sentences that somehow independently generate *ficta*. I do not think even Crittenden would embrace such entities. He repeatedly talks of *ficta* as entities that are created by authors through sentence constructions, and to which we can refer as such. It is only that, and I cannot stress this enough, his ontology does not back his eliminativist view of *ficta*.

Proceeding to *ficta*'s logical incompleteness, Crittenden sees *ficta* as complete entities. One of the main arguments he provides for this claim is that Watson, who has an inside view of the Holmes stories, sees Sherlock as a complete entity, for we would be otherwise dealing with a conceptually odd *fictum*. Although the problem of incompleteness is an ontological one, Crittenden approaches it mainly from the standpoint of practice. He argues that when we deal with realistic *ficta*, we usually assume they exhibit the same behavior ordinary entities exhibit. While this may be serviceable to our practice, it is ontologically inadequate. This inadequacy becomes explicit when we read Crittenden's assertion that Watson, a mere referent, can tell whether Sherlock has a mole on his shoulder or not. Without a proper ontological explanation, I cannot see how this adheres to our ordinary language practices. If *ficta* are non-existent and are only products of sentences that do not report anything, how can we make sense of a *fictum* (Watson) going beyond what is linguistically and semantically written in a text to determine truths/falsehoods of a fellow *fictum* (Sherlock)? Crittenden's theory does not offer an adequate explanation.

Ingarden would not find an issue with Crittenden's formulation that, in the story, Sherlock is depicted as a real entity. Fictional entities are indeed meant to be like real

57) In fact, Ingarden only sketches this argument in a footnote, but I will elaborate on it in the context of my examination.

58) Ingarden, *Controversy II*, 207, footnote 200.

entities, with the key word here being “meant.” I am not sure, though, about stating that Holmes is a real person in the story. In themselves, fictional entities are heteronomous, for they do not have the fundament for their being in themselves. Crittenden’s way of describing Watson as being able to tell if Sherlock has a mole on his shoulder seems to me to be ascribing to him autonomy, not heteronomy, which incidentally means that his entire project should be reconsidered as regards its ontological commitments.⁵⁹ Moreover, adopting Crittenden’s approach may lead to further complications. We, as outsiders, cannot know if Sherlock does or does not have a mole on his left shoulder, but Watson, as an insider, is able to retrieve such information. We can account for the latter in two ways: we can either say (a) Watson has an independent (inside) existential status that allows him to determine properties of other *ficta* that are left open by the author (hence entailing commitment to an independently constituted entity), or (b) we can hold that readers ascribe to Watson the property of being able to tell if Sherlock has a mole on his left shoulder or not. I think (b) is less problematic. If we give Watson the property of being able to tell Holmes is logically complete, that would be an ascribed property, just like the properties ascribed to him by Conan Doyle. The only difference here is that the property is ascribed to him by readers. This shows that *ficta* are something over and above mere *grammaticalia*, since readers can import something into the story that was not originally covered by the author.⁶⁰ These importing acts are intentional acts executed by competent readers. Taking Watson to be a pure *intentionale*, whatever property ascribed to him, within the bounds of realistic fiction, can be said to belong to him intentionally. The problem with (b) is that it is threatened with a danger of infinitism. As Ingarden puts it, the spots of indeterminacy in a fiction are infinite. We can think of countless ways a *fictum* is incomplete.⁶¹ Taking the course of (b), we would have to ascribe a new property to *ficta* for each and every

59) Of course, purely intentionally ascribing autonomy to Sherlock is not a problem. In fact, this is what we ordinarily do when reading fiction. But I do not think that is the same usage Crittenden adopts when he refers to Meinong’s *Sein/Sosein* distinction. To my understanding, his usage is more like “really ascribing autonomy to Sherlock” inside the story, treating it as a separate domain of being.

60) By *ficta* as “*grammaticalia*,” I mean *ficta* as “products of language.” A *fictum*, therefore, is a grammatical object in a certain author’s linguistic construction (story), which should consequently exclude the obtaining of any data about the *fictum* outside the author’s linguistic construction.

61) Compare Ingarden, *Controversy II*, 214–18.

indeterminacy they have, which, as stated above, can be infinite. Therefore, it seems that we, as readers, are stuck in an infinite loop, having to provide an infinite number of properties to *ficta* that are not attributed to them by their authors.⁶²

Nonetheless, this is not as big an issue as it might initially seem. In fact, Ingarden's view of *ficta* properties does not differ much from the principles governing ordinary objects' properties. In stressing the role of competent readers in filling the lacunae left by authors, Ingarden basically states that readers import reality's principles into the fictional world (e.g., spatiotemporal continuity).⁶³ When a fictional object is represented in a realistic fiction, readers complete its contents by importing the qualities of concrete aspects experienced prior to reading the fiction.⁶⁴ For example, readers are aware that Sherlock is supposed to be like a real entity, hence importing the principles associated with real entities into the fiction. Crittenden in fact also adopts the same approach, as he states that principles of normality are read into *ficta*.⁶⁵ His conclusion, though, that *ficta* are complete because of this does not follow. *Ficta* are indeed ontologically incomplete entities, and competent readers complete their spots of indeterminacy (to the best of their ability) with previously experienced aspects and principles of normality. After all, *ficta* are only intended to be like real entities.

(B). Practice

As Thomasson argued, relying too much on practice can lead to many problems, one of which is ascribing to *ficta* properties that do not belong to them.⁶⁶ As explored above, this is exactly what Crittenden does, namely attributing to Watson a property that does not belong to him. Although we treat them as mirroring real entities, realistic *ficta* are

62) While this may well work for some fictional cases, primarily cases related to realistic fiction (e.g., whether Sherlock has *x* or *y* heart[s]), it cannot be generalized to cover all cases of fiction. There are some indeterminacies in fiction that we just cannot fill with the help of readers. This leaves the possibility of these gaps being impossible to fill in unconventional forms of fiction.

The infinitism problem also affects Ingarden, for he explicitly subscribes to the view of infinite indeterminacies.

63) Compare Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 220–30.

64) Compare *ibid.*, 264–65.

65) Compare Crittenden, *Unreality*, 142–43.

66) Compare Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, 20.

not autonomous entities. Just because we refer to them does not change their ontological status. Crittenden is aware of the two sides of *ficta*: their “inside” and “outside,” as he put it. Still, he infringes this distinction by misconceiving the nature of properties in each mode. This could have been avoided had he focused more on the ontological side of his theory. Not only is attributing “existence” to Watson inside the story ontologically out of place, but it is also opposed to how we conceive of *ficta* in our practices. Readers and literary critics are well-aware of Watson’s “non-existence” (heteronomy). As far as literary practices are concerned, *ficta* are not understood to occupy a Meinongian, independent in-story existence. They are also not taken to have the ungrounded, independent ability to determine the logical completeness of other *ficta* within the story, especially if creationism about *ficta* is embraced (as is the case with Crittenden).⁶⁷ We usually treat *ficta* as possessing properties relative to the fiction and properties outside of the fiction. While Crittenden acknowledges this, he does not follow all that it entails.

Instead of restricting *ficta* to their grammar and ascribing to them autonomous existence inside the story, Ingarden’s approach to *ficta* is more aligned with our language and literary practices. This is primarily so because of his emphasis on ontology. To elaborate, following his ontological deliberations on the essence and mode of being of *ficta*, Ingarden is able to supplement his ontological findings with a practice-friendly exposition of *ficta* and their properties. *Ficta*, à la Ingarden, have “strict” properties and “intended” (or “allotted”) properties. Their strict properties are those that are predicated of them outside of the story, for example, that Sherlock is created by Conan Doyle. Intended properties are those that an author intends his characters to possess (e.g., that Sherlock is an English detective). Although these properties are intended to mirror real properties, they, *contra* Crittenden, are not real properties.⁶⁸

67) Creationism necessitates the admission of *ficta* as created entities, following the creative process of an author.

68) This claim can be said to raise some difficulties. If *ficta* properties are not real, why do arguments that conjoin real and fictional entities seem sound? Take the following argument:

Sherlock Holmes smoked a pipe, and Bertrand Russell smoked a pipe; therefore, both Sherlock and Russell smoke(d) a pipe.

Adhering to Ingarden’s strict/intended properties distinction, this is indeed a valid concern. I suggest approaching this problem from the standpoint of Ingarden’s “standard”/“non-standard” property instantiation, in which case Sherlock smokes a pipe non-standardly and Russell standardly. See the ensuing discussion on *ficta* properties for details of my position.

The space-time of the fictional world, likewise, is *quasi*-space-time.⁶⁹ One can find a similar distinction in Meinong and neo-Meinongians. Meinong speaks of *ficta* as possessing “constitutive” and “extraconstitutive” properties.⁷⁰ Constitutive properties are the equivalent to Ingarden’s intended properties, whereas extraconstitutive properties denote what Ingarden terms immanent/strict properties. Notably, Parsons follows Meinong’s historical account, formulating his “nuclear” (constitutive) and “extranuclear” (extraconstitutive) properties on its basis.⁷¹

One of the main problems Meinong’s distinction raises appertains to that, adhering to its logic as a distinction between two “kinds of properties,” it is incomprehensible how *ficta* may share the same property kind with a real entity. For example, it can be said that both Fitzgerald and Gatsby share the constitutive (nuclear) property kind of being a man. In response, many neo-Meinongians have followed Ernst Mally’s lead and adopted a distinction based on “modes of predication.”⁷² Proponents of this distinction have it that all entities share only one kind of property, with the only distinguishing factor being that they differ with regards to the mode in which it is possessed. Accordingly, both Fitzgerald and Gatsby can be said to possess one and the same property, being a man, with Fitzgerald possessing the property externally and Gatsby internally (relative to the fiction). In Edward Zalta’s language, Fitzgerald “exemplifies” what Gatsby can only “encode,” namely being a man.⁷³ One can argue that Ingarden seems to follow the property kinds, in which case his account is also undermined by the charge above. Ingarden’s account of properties is rather complex, for, as I argue elsewhere,⁷⁴ both distinctions (the property kinds and modes of predications) appear to be present in his formulations. The strict/intended properties can be construed as Ingarden’s version of the property kinds as adopted by Meinong and Parsons. But one can also find another distinction put forth by Ingarden between

69) Compare Ingarden, *Controversy I*, 115–16.

70) Compare Meinong, “Über Möglichkeit,” 176.

71) Compare Parsons, *Nonexistent Objects*.

72) Compare Mally, *Gegenstandstheoretische Grundlagen Der Logik Und Logistik*, 64; 76. Mally uses “determining” and “satisfying.”

73) Compare Zalta, *Abstract Objects*, 12.

74) See Jakha, “Ingarden vs. Meinong,” 66, footnote 62.

“standardly” and “non-standardly” instantiated properties,⁷⁵ which parallels the modes of predication distinction upheld by, *inter alia*, Zalta. In my “Ingarden vs. Meinong,” I propose doing away with Ingarden’s combinatorial approach and reducing his property kinds distinction to his modes of predication, in my bid to avert the many problems plaguing the former distinction. (And even the predication modes distinction. Indeed, Ingarden’s version of the distinction is more adequate than Zalta’s).⁷⁶

The handiness of Ingarden’s distinction is made manifest when we consider the problem of incompleteness. *Contra* Crittenden, *ficta* are indeed incomplete entities. We can talk of many intended properties of which the text neither affirms their possession nor denies it. *Ficta*’s incompleteness is embedded in their pure intentionality. Treating them as complete entities would mess with their essence. This is also embraced by ordinary readers and literary critics. They know that a work of fiction can only go so far in depicting a *fictum*’s content. Incompleteness is largely a philosopher’s problem, which means it requires a philosopher’s solution. Ingarden exceeds all expectations by providing not only a philosopher’s solution (based on his ontology), but also a practical solution. *Ficta*’s logical incompleteness is passed on to competent readers, who can fill out the gaps left by authors. In our literary practices, readers are regarded highly, especially those who possess the appropriate aesthetic tools needed to read literary works. Bearing in mind that creating a fiction involves ascribing new properties to *ficta*, it should not come as a surprise that competent readers become “co-creators” of the fiction and *ficta* they help determine. A key concept that Ingarden uses in this regard is “concretization.” Determination and concretization go hand in hand. To be more explicit, when a reader determines a *fictum*’s spot of indeterminacy, they concretize an aspect that was previously in a state of aesthetic potency. Readers concretize *ficta*’s spots of indeterminacy imaginatively.⁷⁷ Valid concretizations ensure readers share the status of co-creators with the original author. Ingarden holds that only competent readers can produce valid concretizations of a literary work. A reader is deemed competent if they possess the prerequisite tools to concretize a given fiction,

75) Compare Uemura, “Ingarden’s Purely Intentional Objects,” 143.

76) See my “Ingarden vs. Meinong” for more details, in particular how I defend Ingarden’s position against Meinong and neo-Meinongians like Zalta and Parsons. For the purposes of my current article, we can safely adhere to Ingarden’s strict/intended properties distinction.

77) Compare Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 269.

mostly the ability to cognize a work's meaning units and ultimately apprehend the work's "polyphonic harmony."⁷⁸ The latter is the pinnacle of concretization. It marks the literary work as being comprised of heterogeneous strata (four, to be concise) that together contribute to the emergence of a work of art with inherent artistic values and aesthetic values that ground the literary work's *sui generis* status as an aesthetic object, which is distinct from both individual concretizations and the material substrate of the work.⁷⁹

These considerations further demonstrate that *ficta* are purely intentional entities that are generated following the creative acts of authors. We cannot account for *ficta*'s incompleteness by restricting them to their grammar, as Crittenden does, for readers do not have to linguistically construct the properties they ascribe to *ficta* in the process of filling out their indeterminacies. In our ordinary practices, it is perfectly natural to treat sentences like (1) "Sherlock Holmes smokes a pipe" as being true, for competent readers are aware that such sentences are merely intended to be true in the story. In short, embracing a Meinongian framework of *ficta* properties comes with many problems that make it difficult to reconcile with practice.⁸⁰ It is much more practical to treat *ficta* as products of authors' creative acts that are endowed with strict and intended properties, and which readers can concretize by determining their incomplete spots.

Conclusion

In this article, I have analyzed Crittenden's account of fictional objects in his *Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects*. I have argued that Crittenden's sketchy ontology of *ficta* does not support his weak eliminativism. Going along the lines of Thomasson's *Fiction and Metaphysics*, I have stressed that the problem of *ficta* is a strictly onto-

78) Compare *ibid.*, 252 and 369–73.

79) Ingarden outlines four heterogeneous strata that, according to him, jointly characterize the literary work's formation (*Gebilde*) as a work of art. These strata are: (1) the stratum of linguistic sound formations, (2) the stratum of meaning units, (3) the stratum of represented objects, and (4) the stratum of schematized aspects. For an analysis of concretization and the literary work's values, see Mitscherling, *Ingarden's Ontology and Aesthetics*, 123–40; Jakha, "Aesthetic Value of Literary Works."

80) See, for instance, Smith, "Ingarden vs. Meinong."

logical problem, which requires an ontological solution. A solution to the problem of *ficta* that accommodates practice is of course to be praised, but not when it is foregrounded at the expense of ontology. I have argued for Ingarden as a champion of ontology and practice, whose way of dealing with *ficta* fares better than Crittenden's on both the ontological and practical sides.

To recap, *ficta* should be approached as something over and above mere *grammaticalia*, namely as purely intentional objects that are formally incomplete, and which readers complete by resorting to practices of language and literary criticism. Following my reading of Crittenden's eliminativism about fictional objects as being a weak one, I have proposed backing his position with Ingarden's ontology of *ficta* as it seems to be in a better position to ground Crittenden's account. Ingarden's ontology, I argued, is certainly better suited to accommodate Crittenden's approach to *ficta* than Meinong's. In so doing, I have upheld a quite peculiar non-eliminativist stance regarding fictional objects, in which these entities' pure intentionality conforms neither to the real nor to the ideal.

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