# Fiction Unlimited

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> Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; truth isn't. (Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, 1906, 155)

An obvious sense in which, *pace* Twain, fiction is stranger than truth is that what is fictional need not be *possible* – physical, metaphysical, and even logical impossibilities are fairly regular occurrences in fictions.

But there is another, related way fiction might be stranger than truth: truth is *limited*, in the sense that only a proper subset of the totality of all propositions is in fact true – for example, it is true that snow is white and false that snow is black. Yet fiction might be *unlimited* – that is, it is an open question whether there is (or could be) a *universal* fiction *f*, within which every proposition is true.

And while the question of whether there is such a fiction is interesting in its own right, its (possible) existence has some striking consequences. For example, the (possible) existence of a universal fiction entails the truth of the *principle of poetic license*:

PPL  Every proposition is such that it can be in the content of some fiction

which has been endorsed by several philosophers, though no explicit argument has been advanced in support of it.[1] However, if there is a (possible) fiction wherein everything is true, then every proposition is such that it is true in some (possible) fiction.[2]

Similarly, universal fictions are relevant for debates about the *alethic puzzle*. According to a strong reading of the puzzle, there are certain propositions that simply *cannot* be fictionalized. Universal fictions would provide direct counter-examples to such a claim, as they entail that every proposition can be true in some fiction.

Finally, universal fictions also have implications – detailed below – for debates about fictional incompleteness and the identity conditions for fictions. So, if one is interested in any of these issues, one should also be interested in the possibility of universal fictions.

Here, we argue that there are such fictions. More specifically, after laying out some preliminaries (§1), we proceed (§2) to offer three distinct universal fictions, along with an easy-to-follow recipe for generating more. Then, after spelling out some consequences (§3), we conclude (§4) by discussing two possible objections to our argument. The general upshot is that fiction, unlike truth, is potentially unlimited.

## 1. Preliminaries

The content of a fiction f can be thought of as a collection of propositions, $\Sigma_f$, whose members are the fictional truths of f. A central concern of the truth-in-fiction-debate is to determine what it is for a proposition to be true in a fiction, and to give general principles to determine the content of a fiction – that is, to determine $\Sigma_f$ for any f. Here, we do not presuppose any particular theory of truth in fiction (though our overall conclusion will have some impact on how exactly such accounts might look).[3]

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[1] Routley (1979, 6), Deutsch (1985, 202), and Philips (1999, 283) endorse PPL, while e.g. Hanley (2004, 121) rejects it.

[2] Whether the reverse entailment (from PPL to the existence of a universal fiction) holds is less clear. PPL would entail the existence of a universal fiction if (i) p is a conjunctive proposition of the form, "((q) and ~(q)) and (principle of explosion)", which, given PPL, is true in some fiction f; and (ii) conjunction elimination is an acceptable operation to perform on the f-truths, and (iii) the relevant version of FMP-LOCAL holds. For more on (iii), see §4 below.

[3] See e.g. Lewis (1978), Currie (1990), and Walton (1990).

As we understand it, fictional content can be divided into two broad sub-types. A fiction's *primary* content comprises all that is explicitly true within the story; thus it is part of the primary content of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* that Nick is from the Mid-west, since the story explicitly asserts this.[4] Meanwhile, a fiction's *secondary* content comprises all of that which goes beyond the primary content. For instance, it is true-in-*Gatsby* that all human beings are mortal, and that Nick lives closer to Gatsby than to Daisy, though neither is part of *Gatsby*'s primary content. These also serve to illustrate the sorts of fictional truths that make up a fiction's secondary content: the first is *imported content*, content that is brought into the fiction from outside, while the second is *entailed content*, content that non-trivially logically follows from core and/or imported content.[5] Exactly how to flesh out the notions of imported and entailed content are tricky matters, but we can stay neutral on them here; all that is relevant for our purposes is that entailed content is non-primary.

So, a given fiction f's content $\Sigma_f$ is composed of f's primary content – those propositions that are explicitly stated as being true-in-F – and its secondary content – those propositions that are either imported into the fiction or are non-trivially entailed by the primary/imported content.

In light of this distinction, we can refine our central question:

UNI-PRIME   Are there (possible) fictions that include all propositions in their primary content?

UNI-SEC     Are there (possible) fictions that include all propositions in their primary *or* secondary content?

The argument we offer entails a positive answer to UNI-SEC, but it cannot be used to support a positive answer to UNI-PRIME. Consequently, while we are bullish about there being *secondary*-universal fictions, we are less clear about *primary*-universal ones.[6]

Three last points before we present our argument. First, fairly broad consensus has it that there are numerous *inconsistent* fictions – fictions that include contradictions in their content. We take it as datum that there are such fictions (indeed, our argument relies upon this assumption). However, a recalcitrant few are adamantly opposed; such fictions are, according to this minority, at best apparently inconsistent.[7] With that in mind, those who reject the very possibility of inconsistent fictions will find little of interest here. (This should be unsurprising, since any universal fiction will also be an inconsistent fiction.)

Second, we are in fact not the first to plump for universal fictions – Routley (1979) and Deutsch (1985) both pursue a similar strategy in arguing for them, envisioning a fiction f where "Everything is true" is true-in-f. From this, they conclude that every possible proposition is true in f – i.e., that f is a universal fiction.

However, for f to genuinely be a universal fiction, 'everything' has to include all propositions in its domain. The problem is that there is no reason to think that the quantifier has the requisite range.[8] Take a parallel case: grant that everyone is treacherous in *Threepenny Opera*. Even so, this doesn't entail that Obama is treacherous in *Threepenny*, for the range of 'everyone' is

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[4] There is much more to be said about e.g. accommodating rhetorical and narratological phenomena, but this rough characterization suffices for present purposes.

[5] The restriction to non-trivial entailment is necessary since all primary content trivially entails itself, which, *sans* restriction, would make all primary content also secondary content.

[6] Of course, if there were any primary-universal fictions, they would be secondary-universal as well.

[7] Those pro-inconsistent fictions include Lewis (1978), Fine (1982), Deutsch (1985), Currie (1990), Byrne (1993), Phillips (1999), Matravers (2003), and Walton (1994); those against include Hanley (2004) and, on certain readings, Nolan (2007). One common strategy to avoid contradiction is to question the narrator's reliability. However, it is controversial whether every narrative literary fiction has an internal narrator - see e.g. Kania (2005), and Köppe & Stühring (2011). Further, there are literary fictions without narrators, e.g. most plays, many poems, and non-literary fictions. Finally, questioning the reliability of the narrator only provides *one* interpretation of the fiction, and does not in itself explain why this interpretation is preferable over one where the fiction is in fact inconsistent.

[8] Fine (1982, 121f) offers a similar objection.

restricted to those individuals who are part of the story (which Obama ain't). So, like how not every individual is part of *Threepenny* yet 'everyone is treacherous' remains true therein, 'everything is true' may be true in the Routley-Deutsch fiction yet not every possible proposition be therein-true – rather, the only propositions that are quantified over are those already included in the story. Thus it seems the only way they can get the appropriate domain is to effectively beg the question, assuming that every possible proposition is already included in f, ready to be quantified over.

Deutsch attempts to circumvent this problem by claiming that the range of quantifiers as they occur in a story is "determined in part by their intended interpretations" and that, as the author of the story, he can insist that the relevant "every" is meant to quantify over *every* proposition (1985, fn16). However, there is significant debate about whether authorial intentions suffice to make something true in a fiction.[9] Further, generally speaking, the intended and actual range of quantification can (and often do) come apart – for example, Mary might start the committee meeting by saying "Everyone is present", thinking this is true because she takes the relevant domain to be the people in the room. However, the actual domain is the committee members (those who have to be present when she starts the meeting). And, if we add that Mary knows that Bill is not in the room but does not know that Bill is on the committee, we've a case where she thinks she has said something true when she in fact has not.[10]

Given these thorny issues, we think it better to find an alternative argument for universal fictions. Thus we will side-step the Routley-Deutsch "everything" route, and offer a different pathway to universal fictions.

Third, to the best of our knowledge, while there has been little discussion in the literature directly addressing the impossibility of universal fictions, certainly some claims have been advanced which entail it. Before our argument, we would like to briefly say something about them.

Fine (1982, 122) asserts that the contents of a fiction must form a set, and not an "illegitimate totality". Yet a universal fiction's contents – i.e., the collection of all propositions – *cannot* form a set, since it contains collections of propositions that are themselves non-set-sized. However, we see little reason to buy the claim that a fiction's *total* contents must form a set; a more plausible restriction is that a fiction's *primary* content must be set-sized.[11] And since our argument only entails the existence of secondary-universal fictions, the objection no longer applies, which is enough to get us off the hook.

Similarly, Hanley (2004) contends that the principle of poetic license is false, as he thinks there are numerous propositions that it is "difficult, and sometimes impossible, to make true in a fiction" (Hanley 2004, 121). And given that universal fictions entails the truth of PPL, this amounts to rejecting the possibility of such fictions.

Specifically, Hanley claims that, in typical American television and movies, a "standard mention of a '555' number never generates the fictional truth that the number in question begins with '555'" but rather leaves the number fictionally indeterminate (Hanley 2004, 121). This is meant to provide direct evidence against PPL and, by extension, universal fictions.

However, Hanley's argument only shows that certain propositions cannot be fictionalized *within certain genres*. And this does not tell against PPL, since PPL can be true even if some genres preclude certain propositions being fictionally true therein. PPL requires that every proposition can be true in some fiction; it need not be possible for it to be true in some fiction of every genre. Further, Hanley's point is fairly obvious, since everyone accepts that a genre's standard features will entail certain restrictions on what is admissible – for example, realistic crime dramas can not

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[9] See e.g. Currie (1986), Davies (1996), and Phillips (1999).

[10] Thanks to Christopher Gauker for the example.

[11] Of course, one might wonder about this restricted claim, but this leads to difficult issues about the possibility of producing fictions that include an infinite number of sentences/distinct propositions as primary content, which, while interesting, go well beyond present concerns.

include fictional propositions about dragons, advanced space-travelling races, or helpful wizards without ceasing to be realistic. Finally, Hanley's claim allows (as he himself admits) for "non-standard" cases where the relevant propositions *are* fictionally true (e.g. when the "555" number is used as a form of product placement). This means that such propositions can in fact be made true *even assuming the genre restriction*. In this way, Hanley's objection to PPL, and hence to the possibility of universal fictions, falls flat.

With these preliminaries out of the way, on to the argument.

## 2. Some universal fictions

Take the following fiction, entitled *Monsieur Impossible*:

> In the Kingdom of Classicalia, where Classical Logic holds, the most famous and wondrous of the King's Musketeers is Monsieur Impossible. (Of course, if one is a member of the King's Musketeers, then one is employed by the King!) Rumored to be from the far-away land of Australia, Monsieur Impossible is the very epitome of the Musketeer ideal. But what is so impressive about him is that he has exactly two hands *and* does not have exactly two hands. And this incredible power – to have and not have exactly two hands – makes him *the* mostly deadly swordfighter around, the elite amongst the elite! Of course, it also makes him the worst swordfighter around, as well as the best (and worst!) cards player…

Two things seem (primarily) fictionally true in this story: (1) Classical Logic holds; and (2) Monsieur Impossible has exactly two hands and ~( Monsieur Impossible has exactly two hands). Using this pair, it is easy to show *Monsieur Impossible* is a universal fiction. For (2) is an instance of an explicit contradiction, which, given (1), entails everything – i.e., given (2), for every possible proposition p, p is fictionally true-in-*MI*. Consequently, *Monsieur Impossible* is a universal fiction.

Of course, we do not need the whole of classical logic – all that is required is *ex contradictione quodlibet* – or, in more theatrical terms, the principle of explosion.[12] Thus we also offer a slightly different fiction, entitled *Ohle's Amazing Adventure*:

> One day, Ohle the wonder-dog set out on a wander through Explodiberg, a land governed by the principle of explosion (which, as we all know, states that from a contradiction, anything follows). During his adventure, Ohle ate exactly three treats and not exactly three treats (rather, exactly four). Doing so, he brought about the greatest calamity Explodiberg ever saw, since everything followed in his wake.

It is easy to show that every possible proposition is part of this fiction's secondary content: the principle of explosion and that Ohle ate exactly three treats and ~( Ohle ate exactly three treats) are both true in the fiction. And, taken together, these entail everything. Consequently, *Ohle's Amazing Adventure* is also a universal fiction: every proposition is fictionally true in it!

This pair highlights a general recipe for generating universal fictions: craft a fiction f that includes, either as primary or secondary content, both the principle of explosion and a contradiction. Together, these guarantee that every proposition is part of f's secondary content. Consequently, f is a secondary-universal fiction.[13]

Note that including a contradiction is not by itself sufficient to make a fiction universal; Bradbury's *A Sound of Thunder* is an inconsistent time travel story, but not everything is true in it, and (infamously) Priest's (1997) *Sylvan's Box* has it that a box containing an impossible object is

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[12] Similarly, the fiction can feature a contradiction as part of its primary or secondary content – either would work just as well.

[13] It is not essential that the fiction be *narrative*, blocking appeals to unreliable narration (see fn6). More generally, it does not matter *how* the required content is generated, just that it is there.

both buried and not buried in a backyard, but nevertheless it is not a universal fiction. Rather, you need a true contradiction *and* the principle of explosion; otherwise, you just have an inconsistent, non-universal fiction.

## 3. Some consequences

At least four interesting consequences immediately follow from the existence of universal fictions. The first concerns fictional incompleteness. Our universal fictions are such that, for every proposition p, both p and its compliment ~p are fictionally true. This entails the disjunctive claim that, for all p, either p or ~p is fictionally true. Consequently, the existence of universal fictions means that fictions are not *essentially* incomplete – there are possible fictions which are complete, in the same sense as e.g. possible worlds.

Second, one view, advanced by e.g. Deutsch (1985, 202), is that the identity of a fiction is fully determined by what is true in it. Thus, on this view, fiction $f_1$ is identical to fiction $f_2$ iff all the same propositions are true in both. But we have presented two distinct fictions – *Monsieur Impossible* and *Ohle's Amazing Adventure* – all of which contain the exact same fictional truths – namely, every possible proposition.

And there is good reason to think these are distinct, as they have different properties regarding *how* certain propositions are included in their content. For example, *Monsieur Impossible* has <Classical logic holds> as part of its primary content, while *Ohle's Amazing Adventure* only has this proposition as part of its secondary content. So, as we have supplied two different universal fictions, the identity conditions for fictions are *not* fixed solely by what propositions are true within them.[14]

Third, as mentioned earlier, the existence of these universal fictions entails that the *principle of poetic license* (PPL) is true, since there being a fiction wherein every proposition is true entails that every proposition is such that it is true in some fiction.

In turn, this leads to an interesting stand-off regarding the *alethic puzzle*. According to a strong reading of the puzzle, there are certain propositions, e.g. <female infanticide is morally right>, that cannot be fictionalized.[15] If correct, such propositions are counter-examples to PPL. But, given the above, PPL is true, hence <female infanticide is morally right> must be fictionalizable after all. So something has to give.

Obviously, we advocate abandoning commitment to the non-fictionalizability of propositions like <infanticide is morally right> in favor of PPL. And we can ease some potential tension about doing so by noting that there are two distinct readings of PPL. One is a generalized version:

PPL-GEN   Every proposition is such that it can be in the primary or secondary content of some fiction

A second is an alternative, restricted version:

PPL-PRIME   Every proposition is such that it can be in the primary content of some fiction

As our argument only generates secondary-universal fictions, it only entails the truth of PPL-GEN, not PPL-PRIME. Thus we can remain neutral on whether every proposition could be in the primary content of some fiction, thereby leaving room for the puzzle of imaginative resistance debate to continue (suitably restricted).[16]

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[14] Walton (1990, 63ff) and Lewis (1978, 39) also reject this criterion of identity for fictions. An alternative, compatible with our conclusion, is that a fiction's identity is determined by its *primary* content; however, Walton (1990) and Levinson (1980) provide (to our minds) convincing criticisms.

[15] See e.g. Gendler (2000) and Walton (2006).

[16] Those inclined to baulk might by comforted by the fact that, in the same universal fiction, it is *not* the case that infanticide is morally right.

## 4. Objections & Conclusions

Before concluding, we would like to anticipate two potential objections. The first argues that our recipe for producing universal fictions does not work without a significant and dubious assumption about what closure principles hold for fictional contents.

Take *Monsieur Impossible* (though the point equally applies to any other fiction generated by our recipe). Granting that, as we stated, both (1) and (2) are true-in-*MI*, the objector claims that the only way to go from this pair to all propositions being true-in-*MI* is by assuming that *MI*'s content is closed under classical logic. But, says the objector, there is no reason to assume this closure, especially given the number of inconsistent-but-non-universal fictions knocking around.

However, we do not need to appeal to *MI*'s closure under classical logic to derive our conclusion. Instead, we can appeal to a principle we call *fictional modus ponens*:

FMP        If $(p \rightarrow q)$ and $p$ are both part of fiction f's content, then $q$ is also part of f's content.

This allows us to derive, from (1) and (2)'s being true-in-*MI*, our conclusion. For (1), when unpacked, includes the conditional, "if $p$ & $\sim p$, then $q$ (for every $q$)" which, when combined with (2) – and given FMP! – suffices to show that every $q$ is true-in-*MI*.

But this might be slightly too quick. For while it is true that (1) classically entails

(A)        If $p$ & $\sim p$, then $q$ (for every $q$)

this, plus (1)'s being true-in-*MI*, does not suffice to ensure that (A) is also true-in-*MI*. After all, entailment doesn't ensure truth in fiction.

Thankfully, this problem can be avoided by including (A) as part of the explicit content of the relevant fiction. Thus we could amend *MI* so as to explicitly incorporate (A), thereby ensuring that an application of FMP entails that *MI* is in fact a universal fiction.[17]

Yet our objector might not be satisfied, pressing on to offer a second objection: FMP is false, since there are some fictions where it fails (any inconsistent, non-universal fiction, like Priest's *Sylvan's Box,* serves as a relevant example). So, says the objector, we seem to have jumped from the closure frying pan into the FMP fire.

A first, quick reply is that these inconsistent, non-universal fictions are not counter-examples to FMP.[18] That is because they do not include (A), which is the premise that interacts with FMP to make a fiction universal. So they vacuously satisfy FMP while still failing to be universal. Meanwhile, our fictions do include (A), non-vacuously satisfy FMP, and – so we contend – are universal. Thus, while both are closed under FMP, universal fictions include (A), while inconsistent, non-universal fictions do not.

This is enough to block the initial worry about FMP holding in full generality. And, if so, then our job is done: *MI* (suitably amended), along with every other fiction generated using our updated recipe, will, by FMP, be a universal fiction.

However, an objector might not find this response completely satisfying. This might be because, following Routley (1979, 10), they hold that there is no uniform logic of fiction; alternatively, they might be motivated by the thought – which is certainly true – that FMP's failure is epistemically possible. So, in the spirit of caution, a further reply is welcome.

With this in mind, distinguish between two readings of FMP. The first treats it as a general principle, applying across the board to all (possible) fictions. Meanwhile, a second, *localized* version of the principle restricts it to a specific fiction.

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[17] In effect, we anticipated something like this with the move to explicitly including the principle of explosion in *Ohle's Amazing Adventure.*

[18] Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting this reply.

To spell this out, it helps to shift to fictional operator talk. Let "$\mathscr{F}_f(p)$", where "f" is a place-holder for singular terms denoting a particular fiction, and "p" a place-holder for sentences, abbreviate "it is true-in-f that p". The generalized reading of FMP says:

FMP-GEN          For all fictions f, $(\mathscr{F}_f(p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, \mathscr{F}_f(p)) \rightarrow \mathscr{F}_f(q)$

We're granting, for the sake of argument, that FMP-GEN is false. However, the *local* reading says:

FMP-LOCAL$_F$     For the particular fiction f, $(\mathscr{F}_f(p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, \mathscr{F}_f(p)) \rightarrow \mathscr{F}_f(q)$

But note that FMP-LOCAL is not a principle, but a *schema*. To get a principle, one must fill in the 'f' with the name of a fiction; doing so provides a truth-evaluable statement, localized to the particular fiction in question. For example, plugging in *Monsieur Impossible* generates the principle:

FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$     $\mathscr{F}_{MI}(p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, \mathscr{F}_{MI}(p)) \rightarrow \mathscr{F}_{MI}(q)$

So understood, there will be a different principle for each fiction, each of which may or may not be true, depending upon the fiction in question. And, in each case, what we rely upon is the relevant local principle to derive our conclusion – i.e., for *Monsieur Impossible*, we use FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$, while other stories use structurally similar, albeit distinct, principles derived from the schema. This means any putative counter-examples say nothing against the (local, fiction-specific) principle that we in fact employ. So, we can spot the objector the claim that the general reading of FMP is false, while still holding that the localized version of the principle – which is what we in fact require – is true.

Further, in certain cases, there are good reasons for thinking that the relevant local principles hold. Recall that *MI* has it that (i) Monsieur Impossible is a member of the King's Musketeers, and (ii) if one is a member of the King's Musketeers, then one is employed by the King. Thus, given FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$, it is true-in-*MI* that Monsieur Impossible is employed by the King. And it is strongly intuitive, given this set-up, that it *is* true-in-*MI* that Monsieur Impossible is employed by the King.

In light of this, with regards to *MI*, the objector is placed in a kind of dilemma: they can either grant or deny this "trivial" inference. If they grant it, then they implicitly accept FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$, which means our explosive instance goes through, too. Alternatively, they can deny FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$ in the explosive case, which means also denying the instance. Yet this seems bad – intuitively, it is true-in-*MI* that Monsieur Impossible is employed by the King! Thus the dilemma: the first horn undercuts the objection, while the latter horn looks utterly implausible. Either way, the objection is diffused.

Our objector might counter with a rarefication of their own. For note that the above case satisfies a version of FMP-LOCAL restricted to consistent premises, like:

FMP-LOCAL-CON$_{MI}$          $\mathscr{F}_{MI}(p \rightarrow q) \,\&\, \mathscr{F}_{MI}(p) \,\&\, p$ is consistent) $\rightarrow \mathscr{F}_{MI}(q)$

This restricted principle would serve to ensure that Monsieur Impossible is employed by the King is true-in-*MI*. Yet it does not suffice to render *MI* a universal fiction, since our means of securing universality goes via an inconsistency. So, what guarantees that *MI* is closed under FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$, rather than this consistency-restricted alternative?

In reply, we offer the following third story, *Clara's Crazy Caper*:

> Exploring the castles, creeks, and crags of the canton of Concorida, where the principle of explosion – which states that, if p & ~p, then q (for every q) – holds, Clara discovered a conclave of carrots. Feeling hungry, Clara consumed exactly three and not exactly three (but rather *four*) carrots. (Of course, if one has consumed exactly three and not exactly

three carrots, then some carrots have been consumed.) Consequently, filled to the brim on crispy carrots, Clara cavorted away, creating chaos.

*CCC* satisfies our recipe, and is a universal fiction. Further, it also has it that (i) Clara consumed exactly three and not exactly three carrots, and (ii) if one consumes three and not exactly three carrots, then some carrots have been consumed. From these, it is natural to conclude that "some carrots have been consumed" it is true-in-*CCC.*

Our objector is again placed in a kind of dilemma: they can either grant or deny this "innocuous" inference. If they grant it, then they implicitly deny FMP-LOCAL-CON$_{CCC}$ in favor of the unrestricted FMP-LOCAL$_{CCC}$, which gives the game away. Alternatively, they can deny FMP-LOCAL$_{CCC}$ in the explosive and innocuous cases. Yet this seems bad – intuitively, it is true-in-*CCC* that some carrots have been consumed! Thus the dilemma: the first horn undercuts the objection, while the latter horn looks implausible. Either way, the objection is diffused.

More generally, the way to demonstrate that the relevant principle is the unrestricted version of FMP-LOCAL is to include some innocuous – that is, non-explosive – inferences, with consequences that are intuitively fictionally true. This makes it clear that shifting to a consistency-restricted version of the principle does not help, at least not without raising further problems.

Of course, an objector might continue, trying to find some further method for distinguishing between these innocuous and explosive cases. However, we are sceptical that such attempts will prove fruitful. This is because we suspect that we'll always be able to pull a similar move: whatever restriction the objector cooks up, we will be able to counter with an innocuous instance, throwing them back into a version of the above dilemma.

But, setting this aside, the shift to local principles makes it clear that, if the objector wishes to show that our argument fails, she will not only have to reject FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$, but *all* the FMP-LOCAL$_F$-style principles for every single fiction generated according to our recipe. And, frankly, this looks implausible without some general reason for thinking that all such principle must fail.[19] Of course, a recalcitrant objector will insist on their falsity. In that case, we have hit a dead-lock: we say FMP-LOCAL$_{MI}$ and its ilk hold, the objector claims they do not. Where to go from here? We suggest that those who feel the pull of the objection take this paper as a challenge: explain, in a non-question begging way, why all these principles *must* fail; otherwise, accept that there are universal fictions (and all that this entails). Either way, we are happy with the result. For even if we have not convinced everyone that fiction, unlike truth, is (strangely) unlimited, we think highlighting what moves one has to make to reject this idea is, in and of itself, an interesting outcome.[20, 21]

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[19] One could restrict the principles by following Beall & Restall (2006) and reading the conditional in a relevant manner, which would support acceptable inferences (like e.g. the "trivial" and "innocuous" ones mentioned above) but block the explosive result. However, even Beall & Restall grant that one can "force classical consequence into service" (2006: 57) on some occasions, which throws us right back into the above morass.

[20] One small point worth noting concerns the issue of serial fictions. Generally, it is thought that sequels may overturn what was (thought to be) true in earlier fictions. This means it is possible to compose subsequent sequels which show that universal fictions generated according to our recipe are not universal after all. However, while we grant that this is certainly possible, all we need is a single (possible) case where there are no sequels, or at least no sequels of the sort that are able to overturn *prima facie* fictional truths of earlier episodes. As this is certainly possible, there is no real threat to our overall argument. For more on serial fictions, see McGonigal (2013), Caplan (2014), Walters (2015), and D'Alessandro (2016).

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