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Abstract	<p>This chapter aims to advance the debate on a problem often raised by philosophers of film who are skeptical of implied narrators in movies. This is the concern that positing such implied narrators leads to absurd imaginings. Indeed, the debate over the cinematic narrator has been at a stalemate most centrally because there seems to be no resolution as to whether it is or is not legitimate to “fill in” the implications of the implied narrator’s presence in the story world. I examine how the “absurd imaginings” problem arises for all the central arguments for the elusive cinematic narrator and discuss why it is legitimate to fill in the implications of the implied narrator’s presence in the world of the fiction film.</p>	
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## Silly Questions and Arguments for the Implicit, Cinematic Narrator

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### CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Fiction films tell a story, with images and sound, and in doing so invite the audience to imagine that specific events have happened, as they are reported and shown in the image and soundtrack of the movie (Carroll 1990, 1996, 2006; Currie 1990; Walton 1990: 39; Lamarque and Olsen 1994).<sup>1</sup> But how more precisely does movie narration work on the viewer so that she comprehends the story? Here there is a tremendous and fascinating debate regarding the nature of cinematic narration, or how a movie conveys the story events to the audience.

This chapter concerns these disagreements. The focus is on the view that there are ubiquitous, implicit narrators in fiction films. Such a narrator is the agent that is tacitly understood to be carrying out a showing of the story events to the audience from the world of the film fiction. My chapter aims to advance the debate on a problem often raised by philosophers who are skeptical of implied narrators in movies. This is the concern that positing such elusive narrators gives rise to absurd imaginings (Gaut 2004: 242; Carroll 2006: 179–180, 2016). The worry arises because critics maintain that the “Realistic Heuristic” governs our imaginings about fiction. The Realistic Heuristic involves the claim that when we engage with a work of fiction, we “fill in” and draw

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<sup>1</sup>For an influential discussion of make-believe and the mimetic arts, see Kendall Walton (1990). For recent discussions of fiction and imagination, see Matravers (2014) and Stock (2017). For an accessible overview of some key debates about fiction and imagination, see Stock (2013).

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24 implications from what is explicitly true in the fiction based on how things  
 25 work in real life, unless it is explicitly stipulated to be otherwise. The problem,  
 26 critics allege, is that when we “fill in” the implications of the implied cinematic  
 27 narrator’s presence in the story world, absurd imaginings follow. For instance,  
 28 how is it possible for an implied narrator to convey the story of the Battle of  
 29 Dunkirk from the scene of the action without getting shot or having to duck  
 30 bullets? George Wilson, a supporter of some kind of implicit, “narrating  
 31 agency” in fiction films, maintains that the indeterminate nature of what is true  
 32 in the story world means that questions about how the implied narrating  
 33 agency is able to carry out its mission are “silly” ones to ask (Wilson 2011, 2013).

34 The debate between friends and foes of the cinematic narrator has been at a  
 35 stalemate most centrally because there seems to be no resolution as to whether  
 36 the questions critics raise about the implied narrator in movies *are* legitimate  
 37 ones to ask. In this chapter, I examine how the “absurd imaginings” problem  
 38 arises for all the central arguments for the elusive cinematic narrator and discuss  
 39 why the questions critics pose about this narrator *are* legitimate ones to ask.

40 In Part I, I introduce some terminology relevant to understanding the  
 41 debate about cinematic narrators. In Parts II, III, and IV, three central argu-  
 42 ments—The Narration Implies a Narrator Argument, The Ontological Gap  
 43 Argument, and the Imagined Seeing Thesis—are considered and assessed. In  
 44 Part V, we focus on the arguments for and against the claim that positing the  
 45 implied narrator in movies gives rise to absurd imaginings.

46 In my concluding comments, I briefly discuss directions of research that  
 47 further inquires into cinematic narration might take.

## 48 *Part I: Narration and Narrators*

49 We should clarify some terminology. Fiction films convey a story, which is  
 50 about something, what we call its fictional content. The story is concerned  
 51 with giving an account of imagined characters and situations. A film has a *plot*,  
 52 an underlying sequence of events as they occur in the story, and narration, the  
 53 telling or relating of these fictional events to the audience.<sup>2</sup> Cinematic *narra-*  
 54 *tion* is the way in which the film tells a story.<sup>3</sup>

55 Some of the ways in which we talk about narration in cinema has its origins  
 56 in literary theory.<sup>4</sup> Someone creates or makes a work of literary fiction: this is  
 57 the actual flesh-and-blood author. The author is something external to the  
 58 film, its cause or creator. So, for example, Conan Doyle is the author of the  
 59 Sherlock Holmes stories. An author also sometimes creates a *narrator*, an  
 60 internal component of the work that is the fictional voice that recounts the

<sup>2</sup> See Wilson 2003 and Livingston 2005 for a survey of some of the points in contention about narrative, in general. For skepticism about the usefulness of talking about cinematic narration, see Pye (2013: 136).

<sup>3</sup> For an introduction to the basic principles of cinematic narration, see Bordwell (1985: 48–61) and Carroll (2008: 116–146).

<sup>4</sup> See Gaut (2004) and Thomson-Jones (2007).

happenings and situations that take place in the story. For example, in the Sherlock Holmes stories, it is Sherlock's trusty sidekick, Doctor Watson, who is a character in and the narrator of the Holmes stories.

Similarly, someone creates a film: this is the flesh-and-blood filmmaker, the actual person who is the cause or creator of a film. Where it is reasonable to think that one individual exercises the most significant control over the movie, we can speak of the filmmaker as the counterpart of the author (Livingston 1997). Alternatively, when it makes sense to think of the movie as the creative product of a group of individuals, such as the director, the screenwriter, the cinematographer, and so on, we can say the movie is the collaborative project of multiple filmmakers (Gaut 2010: 128–132).

When literary theorists talk about how works of fiction convey points of view on the events in the story, they often use the concept of the “implied author.” This is a hypothetical construct whose viewpoint on what happens in the story world makes itself clear in the text (Booth 1961: 70–71; Nehamas 1981). Likewise, some use the term “implied filmmaker” for the hypothetical agent who is responsible for the sensibility and attitudes manifest in the film's narration.<sup>5</sup>

We said that a narrator is a fictional character that recounts the goings on in the story. Some novels have explicit character-narrators, such as Doctor Watson in the Sherlock Holmes novels or the character of Esch, who tells her story in the first-person in Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*. In these novels, it is fictional that the characters are telling the story. However, some hold that in every literary fiction, there are implicit narrators—fictional beings who recount the story events as real to the reader. These narrators are implicit, not explicitly introduced, and they have no interaction with the other fictional characters in the story. The actual author cannot tell the story because she does not believe the events in her story happened. Instead, there must be a narrator who is part of the story world and who believes the characters and events exist and reports them as fact to the reader.

The debate over cinematic narration concerns whether we should make the same move and say that there are implicit narrators in movies by whose actions we come to know about the depicted events in the world of the film. One central point of contention is whether the same reasons that some say there are implicit narrators in *literary fictions* carry over to support the claim that *movies* standardly have implicit narrators as well.

A second is how best to describe the specific imaginative experience of the audience who watches a movie. We can understand this point of contention as a question about what the audience at the movies is “mandated” to imagine.

<sup>5</sup> See Wilson's discussion of the implied filmmaker of *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) in Wilson (1986: 134–9). Some, such as David Bordwell, reject the notion of an “implied filmmaker” and, instead, prefers to talk about how the “narration itself” cues the viewer to be surprised, sympathetic, and so on (Bordwell 1985: 62). Greg Currie (1995a, b) uses the concept of an “implied filmmaker” to address unreliable narration in fiction films.

100 The idea is that a fiction film “mandates” or requires that the viewer imagine  
 101 various things as part of their correct comprehension and appreciation of the  
 102 movie’s narrative. The second point of contention is then: are viewers at the  
 103 movies “mandated” to imagine just the fictional contents of the story?  
 104 Alternatively, are they also required to imagine *how* it is that they come to learn  
 105 of the story events? If so, is it standard for viewers to learn about the world of  
 106 the story through an implicit, fictional narrator? If the answer to this last ques-  
 107 tion is “yes,” then we say that the implicit narrator “mediates” our access to the  
 108 story events and the narrator presents those events to us “indirectly” (Walton  
 109 1990: 357).

110 Now, to illustrate, some fiction films mediate our access to the story by  
 111 using characters from the story that the film explicitly introduces as the tellers  
 112 of the tale, as happens in *Shawshank Redemption* (Drabont, 1994) or *Murder*  
 113 *My Sweet* (Dmytryk, 1944). Films also tell the story by using omniscient narra-  
 114 tors such as the voice-over narrator in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Anderson,  
 115 2001). In this case, the narrator belongs to the fictional world and reports the  
 116 events as if they happened, but is not involved in any of the story events.

117 But what does the audience imagine when they watch a fiction film where  
 118 the story is not told either by a character-narrator or by an omniscient, third-  
 119 person narrator, as is the case with *The Wizard of Oz*? Some claim that *every*  
 120 fiction film has an implicit, fictional narrator who is responsible for conveying  
 121 the story, as a whole, to the audience. Call this the “Ubiquity Thesis” (see  
 122 Kania 2005: 47). We now turn to examine arguments for this thesis.

## 123 *Part II: Narration Implies a Narrator*

### 124 *Chatman’s Argument*

125 Why should we think that there are ubiquitous fictional narrators in movies?  
 126 Seymour Chatman has argued for the implied cinematic narrator, simply by  
 127 considering what is implicit in the concept of narration (Chatman 1990: 128;  
 128 see also Levinson 1996: 252). Thus, Chatman’s argument is known as the  
 129 Analytic or A Priori Argument.<sup>6</sup> His argument is that the meaning of the con-  
 130 cept of “narration” logically implies there must be a narrator.

### 131 *The Narration Implies a Narrator Argument:*

[AU3]

#### 132 *Stage One* (Chatman 1990: 113–15)

- 133 1. Every narrative is an activity, the act of telling or showing a story.
- 134 2. Activities must have agents.
- 135 3. The agent of a narration is its narrator.
- 136 4. Therefore, necessarily, for every act of storytelling, there is a narrator.

<sup>6</sup>Gaut (2004: 235–236) calls it the former; Kania (2005: 47–48), calls it the latter.

*Stage Two* (Chatman 1990: 133–4)137 [AU4](#)

5. Fictional films contain narratives. 138
6. Therefore, necessarily, for every fiction film there is a fictional narrator. 139

Chatman responds to David Bordwell, who proposes that narration is a process or *activity* of selecting, arranging, and rendering story material (Bordwell 1985: xi). Chatman counters by saying that activities require agents; there is no doing without a doer (Stage One above). In the case of cinematic narration, the agent carries out the showing of the story to the audience. The narrator is not an actual human being (see Stage Two above), so this means the narrator cannot be the actual filmmaker who creates the film.

Also, Chatman argues the narrator cannot be the implied filmmaker. Narration, the act of telling a story, involves communication between a sender and a receiver, whereas the implied filmmaker (hypothetically) invents the narrative, but does not communicate it to the audience, says Chatman (1990: 130). Narration implies someone or something that narrates: therefore, in literary works and fiction films, there is a narrator, distinct from the actual filmmaker, who uses the soundtrack and the series of edited photographic images to convey the story.

*Questions About Chatman's Argument*

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Some question the claim that narration logically implies a narrator. For example, David Bordwell's view is that every property attributed to a narrating agent can instead be ascribed to the film's "narration itself" (Bordwell 1985: xi). Critics say in reply that this involves an inappropriate personification of the filming process, or it is a shorthand device for saying there is a narrating agency doing the narration, which does not get rid of an intentional agency doing the storytelling (Gaut 2010: 200; see also Currie 1995a, b: 247–9).<sup>7</sup> So many are inclined to accept that narration implies a narrator.

The central problem with Chatman's argument is that it fails to establish that narration requires a *fictional* narrator. For even if we restrict the argument to fictional narratives, and we suppose that the claim that (a) there is a telling or narration of a fictional story, entails the claim that (b) there is someone who tells the story, it does not follow without some further argument that (c) there is *fictional* narrator or teller of the story. For it could be the author who is the one who tells the story.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>For the same reason, some who accept the idea that storytelling or narration is an intentional activity reject Kendall Walton's suggestion that there could be a "naturally occurring" and non-intentionally produced story, for instance, cracks in wood that seem to tell a story, provided the audience standardly decided to *use* such things as "props" in their game of make-believe (Walton 1990: 52).

<sup>8</sup>See Kania (2005: 48), Köppe and Stürhring (2011), Gaut (2004: 235–237), and Wilson (1997: 299–300).

171 Indeed, some maintain that given that narratives are artifacts that are made  
 172 to communicate a story, the clear choice for the person who tells the story is  
 173 the actual author or filmmaker. For the narrator is the person whose intentions  
 174 have to be understood if the story is to be correctly appreciated and that would  
 175 be the actual person who created the story (Currie 2010: 66). If this line of  
 176 criticism is successful, the intentional nature of a film, as a work designed to  
 177 communicate a story, leads back to the actual author as the storyteller, not  
 178 toward an implied cinematic narrator. And the attempt to say that logic requires  
 179 there are implicit fictional narrators in every film fails.

180 Finally, when we think of explicit narrators, we normally suppose it is appro-  
 181 priate to ask things such as, how does the narrator know about these things?  
 182 And, what is its point of view? (Currie 2010: 66). But there are no answers to  
 183 these questions about an implicit narrator, who is not explicitly introduced as  
 184 the agent giving us access to the story. Chatman tries to maintain that ques-  
 185 tions about how the narrator works are “non-questions” not in need of an  
 186 answer (Chatman 1990: 130). But as we will see, such queries about the  
 187 implicit narrator are not disposed of so easily.

### 188 *Part III: The Ontological Gap Argument*

#### 189 *Can the Actual Filmmaker Tell Her Fictional Story?*

190 The argument we will discuss in this section aims to make up for the deficits in  
 191 Chatman’s argument. It does not try to reason, a priori, from the concept of  
 192 narration to the existence of a fictional narrator. Rather, the argument is that  
 193 implicit cinematic narrators are needed to explain the nature of our engage-  
 194 ment with fiction films. The argument, presented by Jerrold Levinson in a rich  
 195 discussion of film music and narrative agency (and recently defended in Wilson  
 196 2011 and Matravers 2014), has come to be known as the “Ontological Gap  
 197 Argument.”<sup>9</sup>

#### 198 *Ontological Gap Argument:*

- 199 1. Reason demands an answer to the question of what makes possible our  
 200 knowledge of the story events.
- 201 2. Only fictional beings can have access to events in the world of the fiction.
- 202 3. Therefore, only a fictional narrator can convey to us the knowledge of  
 203 the events in the world of the fiction.
- 204 4. We do have knowledge of the story events in film fiction.
- 205 5. Therefore, there is a fictional being, an implicit, cinematic narrator who  
 206 is responsible for conveying the knowledge of the events in the story.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>See Levinson (1996: 252–256); so-named by Andrew Kania in (2005).

<sup>10</sup>Levinson describes the cinematic narrator as an agent who provides access to the story world. But in a note, he also endorses another role for the cinematic narrator: the cinematic narrator is

Note that the conclusion of the argument, (5) above, applies to all fictional 207  
 movies. Thus, if the Ontological Gap Argument is correct, the Ubiquity Thesis 208  
 is established. Implicit fictional narrators are ubiquitous; they are standard in all 209  
 fiction films. Such implied narrators are “the best default assumption available 210  
 for how we make sense of narrative fiction film” (Levinson 1996: 252). 211

But does the argument stand up? If this is the correct way to formulate 212  
 Levinson’s argument, then several problems arise. 213

One worry is that the argument is undermined by its assumptions (Kania 214  
 2005: 48–49). Premise (2) says that only fictional beings can have access to the 215  
 world of fiction. But the cinematic narrator, Levinson supposes, is part of the 216  
 story world. It follows that the audience cannot have access to the fictional nar- 217  
 rator and its fictional narration since this occurs in the world of the story. So 218  
 implied fictional narrators do not help with the worry about how we “access” 219  
 the story world. Also, Noël Carroll raises a Platonic Third-Man style objection. 220  
 The Ontological Gap Argument maintains that we need a fictional being to 221  
 access items in the fiction. Since the cinematic narrator is part of the story 222  
 world (even if it does not interact with the other denizens in the world), then 223  
 we are off on an infinite regress, and we will need another cinematic narrator 224  
 to access the first cinematic narrator, and so on! (Carroll 2006: 179). 225

Another point of contention is the claim that only a fictional being can show 226  
 the story events to the audience (premise 3). It follows that the actual or 227  
 implied filmmaker cannot show or narrate the goings on in the story. The film- 228  
 maker, either actual or implied, can show us images, for instance, shots of the 229  
 sets on the lot of Universal Studio, which are filmed to *represent* Frankenstein’s 230  
 castle. However, the filmmaker cannot show the audience the fictional goings 231  
 on in Frankenstein’s castle, for they stand apart from it, in the outside (actual) 232  
 world (Carroll 2016: 117). 233

Carroll challenges the Ontological Gap Argument by testing our intuitions 234  
 about scenes in which movie directors appear as themselves, a not uncommon 235  
 practice in cinema (Carroll 2016: 121). Carroll discusses the case of Bergman’s 236  
*Persona* (1966), where toward the end, we see documentary-style scenes of 237  
 Bergman and the camera crew (Carroll 2016: 121). What are we supposed is 238  
 going on in this scene? It is natural to suppose that the filmmaker, Bergman, is 239  
 appearing in the story, not some fictional stand-in. For, if contrary to fact, 240  
 Bergman was to have a heart attack in the scene, who would we say died? 241  
 Carroll maintains that our intuition tells us that it would be the actual director, 242  
 Bergman, not some fictional doppelganger, Carroll maintains. These and simi- 243  
 lar examples (for instance, Hitchcock making a cameo appearance in his films) 244  
 give us reason to question the sharp dichotomy between the fictional world 245  
 and the actual filmmaker on which the Ontological Gap Argument rests. 246

also responsible for crafting the plot, the underlying sequences of events in the story (see Levinson 1996: 280, footnote 21).

247 *Defending the Ontological Gap Argument*

248 In reply, Levinson is likely to say the above formulation of his argument misses  
249 his central point. Viewers at the movies imagine that they are receiving visual  
250 information from the story world. The actual filmmaker cannot convey visual  
251 information from the fictional world. Only a narrator operating from within  
252 the world of the fiction, for whom the events are “real and reportable” can give  
253 the viewer the sort of perceptual access that she imagines herself to have  
254 (Levinson 1996: 255). Indeed, Derek Matravers recently argues that Levinson’s  
255 point involves the “standard view” that to “imagine a story” involves some-  
256 thing like, “to imagine it is a report of actual events” (Matravers 2014: 123).

257 However, it is far from clear that this is the consensus view on what is  
258 involved when viewers imagine a story, by either reading a literary fiction or  
259 watching a fiction film. Critics insist that an important point is being begged in  
260 describing what the viewer imagines that she is seeing is a “report” of events, if  
261 this is taken to imply the viewer imagines she is seeing a visual recounting of  
262 actual events (Carroll 2016: 126). Instead, other explanations of how a movie  
263 works on the viewer so she understands what is going on or true in the story  
264 are available.

265 Noël Carroll proposes the view, for example, that what is so in fiction is  
266 whatever the maker or makers of the fiction intended the audience to imagine  
267 (Carroll 2016: 122). Call this the Imagination Account of Fiction. If the actual  
268 filmmakers of *An American Werewolf in London* (John Landis, 1981), for  
269 example, mandate that the audience imagines that American college student,  
270 David Kessler, is bitten by a werewolf and turns into one, then it is true in the  
271 fiction that this is so. If Carroll is right, there is no need to posit a fictional nar-  
272 rator, reporting the story events as if they are real, to explain how a viewer  
273 understands what goes on in the story. Narrative comprehension comes about  
274 through the “fictive intent” of the work’s creator (Carroll 2006: 176).

275 Derek Matravers, however, insists that the Imagination Account of Fiction  
276 is mistaken (Matravers 2010: Chapters 3 and 7). He firmly rejects the idea that  
277 fiction can be defined by the creator’s mandate to imagine the story contents.  
278 For fictions mandate that we imagine, as well as believe, various things are so  
279 in the story world. For example, a viewer of *Nowhere in Africa* (2002, Caroline  
280 Link) is mandated to imagine various things, such as that Walter and Jettel  
281 Redlick are a Jewish couple that is forced to relocate from Nazi Germany in  
282 1938 to a farm in Kenya. However, the director intends that we also believe  
283 various things, for instance, that Kenya is in Africa.

284 Is it possible for the Imagination Account of Fiction to account for the fact  
285 that there are truths in fiction we are mandated to believe as well as imagine?  
286 In a very recent book-length treatment of imagination and fiction, Kathleen  
287 Stock suggests that it can. She defends what she calls “extreme intentionalism,”  
288 the view that the fictional content of a work is what the author intended the  
289 reader to imagine (Stock 2017). In response to Matravers, she argues that the  
290 total content of a fiction is stored in the mind of the reader and then marked as  
291 “imagining.” When the author intends the reader to believe various things are

so in the story, the reader indexes these truths as beliefs. Thus, Stock responds that the Imagination Account can acknowledge that an author intends that some of a work's contents are to be believed and not just imagined (Stock 2017: 168).

Noël Carroll explains how this type of mental compartmentalization might work. The default assumption is that what is true in the fiction is what the filmmaker mandates that the viewer imagine. However, as we work to comprehend the story's narrative, depending on the film, we might then "suspend" the mandate to imagine various things as so in favor of a mandate to believe these things instead (Carroll 2016: 124). For example, as we comprehend the story in *Gone With the Wind* (1939, Fleming), we imagine the author mandates us to believe that certain things are so in the life of Scarlett O'Hara, but then come to understand that we need to believe various things (for instance, that Atlanta is in Georgia) (Carroll 2016: 124). We might say that in Carroll's view, as we engage with a work of fiction, we go through a process of "reflective equilibrium" in which we measure hypotheses about what goes in the story against the evidence that is presented in the story figure out what we are mandated to imagine versus what we are mandated to believe. To be sure, more could be said about how this happens, as Carroll acknowledges. But in principle, we see how a response to Matravers's objection to the Imagination Account of Fiction works.

Carroll's reply to Matravers also has implications for another point that often comes up in the discussion of the Ontological Gap Argument. For in defending the argument, Levinson seems to make use of what is known as the Assertion Argument.<sup>11</sup> According to this view, movie narration works the way in which some think that narration in literary fiction works. Literary works employ declarative sentences to report the goings on of characters and events in the story, as does the first sentence of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* "Not for the first time, an argument had broken out over breakfast at number four Privet Drive." Declarative sentences make utterances or assertions, and it is natural, the argument goes, for the reader to imagine that where there is an assertion, there is an asserter, the implicit narrator of the story.<sup>12</sup>

George Wilson builds on the Assertion Argument to argue that we need implicit narrators in literature for the reader to understand what is true in the fiction versus what is just supposition (Wilson 2007: 82–83). If, to use a version of Wilson's example, "Katie loves Hubble. Many people thought this was true. But was is so?" there is a question if we are supposed to take "Katie loves Hubble" as something we imagine is true in the story versus something we are just supposed to consider as a possibility. Wilson's idea is that to figure out that "Katie loves Hubble" is true in the story, we need to determine whether we should imagine a fictional, implicit narrator is "asserting" that this is so.

<sup>11</sup> Carroll (2006: 197), Thomson-Jones (2009: 299); see also Matravers (2014: 123).

<sup>12</sup> Walton (1990: 265), Matravers (2014: 122).

333 However, we can see how Carroll and others might reply that no such imag-  
 334 ining of a fictional narrator is necessary. The reader faces a choice of taking  
 335 “Katie loves Hubble” as true in the fiction versus something she is simply sup-  
 336 posed to wonder about or entertain as a possibility. Her task then is to deter-  
 337 mine whether the author mandates her to imagine that “Katie loves Hubble”  
 338 is true in the story or whether “Katie loves Hubble” is something she should  
 339 just consider as a possibility in the story. To determine the author’s intentions,  
 340 she asks which hypothesis makes the most sense of the narrative as a whole. No  
 341 fictional narrator is needed. Wilson replies that while it is possible to figure out  
 342 what is true in the story without imagining a narrator asserting it to be so, it is  
 343 “extremely strained and artificial” to not have an implied narrator be the way  
 344 one ascertains the truth in a fiction (Wilson 2011: 120).

345 Conclusion: *Where Do Things Then Stand with the Ontological Gap*  
 346 *Argument?*

347 To accept it, we must make several assumptions about viewer’s experience at  
 348 the movies. First, viewers at the movies imagine they are receiving a report  
 349 from inside the story world; second, that to comprehend what is true in the  
 350 fiction, we need to imagine a fictional presenter asserting or reporting that  
 351 things are so in the story world. Implicit narrator skeptics call both these  
 352 assumptions into question. Instead, they propose the Imagination Account of  
 353 Fiction: that we can comprehend what is true in the story by what the author  
 354 mandates us to imagine. The Imagination Account faces some challenges, spe-  
 355 cifically the fact that sometimes we are mandated to not imagine things are so  
 356 in the story world, but also believe them. This is a challenge that proponents  
 357 of the Imagination Account acknowledge they have to meet. But they maintain  
 358 that there is ample motivation to do so. There is simply no evidence that the  
 359 “plain viewer” at the movies imagines herself to access the story events through  
 360 the mediation of a fictional narrator (Carroll 2016: 126).

361 As noted, in Part I, some suggest that the reasons for thinking there are  
 362 implicit narrators in literature also support narrators in movies. However, nov-  
 363 els convey a story with words, while the use of images is central to storytelling  
 364 in films. In the next section, we look at George Wilson’s formidable argument,  
 365 which takes into account the nature of cinematic narration as visual storytelling.

#### 366 *Part IV: The Imagined Seeing Thesis*

##### 367 *Imagined Seeing at the Movies*

368 Like Levinson, Wilson is interested in how audiences at the cinema say that, in  
 369 some sense, they “see” or make perceptual contact with the fictional events and  
 370 characters in the drama.<sup>13</sup> Wilson acknowledges that the audience does not

<sup>13</sup>Wilson (2011: 7). Wilson is inspired by a fascinating discussion of visualization at the theater and at the movies in Williams (1976).

literally see the characters in the narrative story, yet he wants to take seriously their talk of “seeing” the characters in the story. 371  
372

To do so, Wilson argues for a distinctive thesis regarding movie narration: the *Imagined Seeing Thesis*, the view that movie narratives work on viewers by prompting them to imagine that they see the characters and events in the story, or “imagine seeing” for short. 373  
374  
375  
376

There are many questions that philosophers raise about the Imagined Seeing Thesis. One basic question is: just what is imagined seeing? Is it just a manner of speaking? Should the phenomenon Wilson calls “imagined seeing” be analyzed or reduced to other sorts of imagining? For instance, perceptual imagining, which is counterfactually dependent on perception (Currie 1990: 181–185) or “seeing-in,” where one imagines one thing (a photographic image of Cary Grant) as another (an image of Roger Thornhill).<sup>14</sup> Is the Imagined Seeing Thesis an empirical claim about how viewers, in fact, engage, with movies? (Stecker 2013: 153). If so, what is the empirical evidence in support of it? 377  
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Imagined seeing is often differentiated from impersonal imagining, or imagining that certain things are so in the fiction, for example, that Harry Potter is a student at Hogwarts, the school for wizards.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, imagined seeing is a form of personal imagining, for I place myself into the content of what I imagine, for instance, I imagine that I see Dorothy and Toto arriving in the land of Oz.<sup>16</sup> Imagined seeing is thought to be a kind of experiential imagining because when a visual representation induces imagined seeing in the viewer, it is said to induce an experience one thinks of as “as if” one were actually seeing the events and characters in the fiction (Wilson 2011: 73, 2013: 167). 386  
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Talk of imagined seeing gives Wilson a distinctive way to argue for his version of the implicit cinematic narrator, a “minimal narrating agency” (Wilson 2011: 112). This minimal narrating agency has no personal characteristics; its only function is to show the story events to the audience. Thus, Noël Carroll has dubbed this argument the “Seeing/Showing” Argument for the implicit cinematic narrator (Carroll 2016). 395  
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*The Seeing/Showing Argument:* 401

1. Movie narration works on the audience by standardly prompting them to imagine that they see the story events from the fictional world. 402  
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2. If (1), then standardly, in all fiction films, there must be a fictional presenter, an implicit, minimal narrating agency that shows the audience the events from the world of the fiction. 404  
405  
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<sup>14</sup>For discussions of seeing in, see Wolheim (1998: 217–238), Hopkins (2008, 2016), and Stecker (2013). For a response to Wolheim that imagined seeing should not be understood in terms of seeing in, see Walton (2002).

<sup>15</sup>Some philosophers, such as Noël Carroll, Colin McGinn, and Greg Currie maintain that imagining at the movies is standardly impersonal imagining. See Carroll (1995: 98–99, 2006, 2016), Currie (1991, 1995a, b), and McGinn (2005) and Gaut (1998: 333–334, 2010: 217).

<sup>16</sup>For personal versus impersonal imaginings, see Currie (1990: 181–185).

- 407 3. Therefore, standardly, in all fiction films, there is a minimal narrating  
408 agency that shows the audience the events from the world of the fiction.  
409 4. If the Seeing/Showing Argument is correct, then, standardly, in every  
410 fiction film there are implicit “narrating agencies” that mediate our access  
411 to the story worlds and the claim that *every* fiction film has an implicit  
412 narrator is confirmed. But how sound is the argument?

413 *The Imagined Seeing Thesis: How to Formulate It?*

414 The Imagined Seeing Thesis needs to be refined, as Wilson recognizes, because  
415 there are some puzzling questions that arise when we try to take seriously view-  
416 ers talk that they imagine seeing the events and characters from the fiction.

417 The problem with imagined seeing arises from the following claims: if the  
418 audience imagines that they are seeing the story events, then they imagine see-  
419 ing them from a series of definite visual perspectives. If they imagine seeing  
420 from a visual perspective, then they also imagine that they see from a vantage  
421 point that is within the story world. This would be the account of the *IST* that  
422 George Wilson calls “Face-to-Face-Imagined Seeing”:

423 *Face-to-Face Imagined Seeing Thesis:*

424 When the audience watches a fiction film, they are prompted to imagine that they  
425 are seeing the story events by standing face-to-face with them (Wilson 2011: 36).

426 But *Face-to-Face Imagined Seeing* gives rise to a host of perplexing questions.  
427 Is it plausible to think that as we watch Christopher Nolan’s *Dunkirk* (2017),  
428 for example, we are mandated to imagine that we are there on the beach at  
429 Dunkirk as bullets fly and the Allied Forces are rained down with bullets?<sup>17</sup>  
430 What do we then imagine about how we are able to dodge bullets? And when  
431 we imagine seeing a murder in the story that is stipulated to be unseen, doesn’t  
432 that involve us in engaging in contradictory imaginings, that (a) we imagine  
433 that it is true that the murder is unseen and (b) we imagine seeing the murder  
434 (Currie 1995a, b; Carroll 1995, 2005, 2016; Gaut 2010)?

435 Wilson rejects *Face-to-Face Imagined Seeing* because he does not think it is  
436 true to the viewer’s experience. It is not part of our engagement with a movie  
437 that we imagine ourselves located within the story space, at the viewpoint  
438 implied by the vantage point of the motion picture shot.

439 So Wilson instead favors this version of imagined seeing:

440 *Mediated Imagined Seeing:*

441 The audience imagines that they see a recording of the events in the story world  
442 that has been photographically derived in some undetermined way (Wilson  
443 2011: 89).

<sup>17</sup> But see Thomson-Jones (2012), who argues that some films prompt the audience to imagine that they are moving within the world of the film.

According to *Mediated Imagined Seeing*, the audience imagines that they see the story events, indirectly, through seeing a motion-picture-like recording of them. Just how this recording is obtained is not part of what the audience needs to imagine (Wilson 2011: 89–91).

Wilson has a battery of arguments in favor of *Mediated Imagined Seeing*. His most central point is that *Mediated Imagined Seeing* is the best way to explain the way that aspects of cinematic construction such as color, grain, focus, camera angle, and editing mediate the audience’s imagined seeing of the characters and action. For example, when the viewer sees the action jump quickly from one time and place to the next, as happens in the final shots of *North By Northwest*, what does the viewer imagine is going on? According to *Mediated Imagined Seeing*, she does not explain this as the *actual filmmaker’s* decision to move the action by having a rapid cut. Instead, the viewer imagines that there is some editing going on at the level of the fiction, through the action of the implicit, minimal narrating agency.

One worry is that, like its cousin, *Mediated Imagined Seeing*, is open to the objection that it gives rise to absurd imaginings (Gaut 2004: 242; Carroll 2006: 179–180). For if the viewer imagines she is watching motion picture shots of actual events, then she will need to imagine the implications of this, and embarrassing questions follow such as how is the fictional narrator able to record the incidents and go unnoticed? How can there be a recording of a story, such as *The Ten Commandments* (Demille, 1956) that takes place in B.C.E., before the invention of the camera?

Wilson is aware of these objections and says that we may imagine that we are watching segments of the story world via “naturally iconic shots,” shots that are causally dependent on the scene but need not be produced by a camera. So, imagining the presence of a camera or other recording device need not be part of what it is that the audience imagines (Wilson 1997: 113, 2011: 48).

Thus, the burden of Wilson’s reply to the concern about absurd imagining is that viewers can imagine things without having to imagine the implications of what they are imagining (Wilson 2013: 161). Wilson supports this claim he derives from some work by Kendall Walton (Walton 1990: 174–182). Walton’s idea is that there are questions about fictions whose answers are not specified and so these questions are “silly,” pointless, and inappropriate to ask.

Wilson takes up Walton’s idea and illustrates it with the example from Flash Gordon in the old black and white science fiction serials (1936). In the story, we suppose that Flash Gordon has a viewing machine that enables him to see anywhere in the universe, but such a device violates the laws of physics, as we know them. Wilson maintains that it is a silly question for the viewer to imagine how such a device works, for this is indeterminate or not specified in the Flash Gordon stories (Wilson 1997: 314–315). The same is true if viewers had to imagine the implications of imagining they are watching a recording of actual events. With this move, Wilson tries to fend off the absurd imaginings objection by saying that questions about how the recording of events comes about are silly ones to ask.

489 In reply, critics such as Berys Gaut and Noël Carroll insist that what is known  
 490 as the “Realistic Heuristic” governs our imaginings about fiction. Their idea is  
 491 that when we engage with a work of fiction, we “fill in” and draw implications  
 492 from what is explicitly true in the fiction based on how things are in the real  
 493 world, unless it is explicitly stipulated to be otherwise.<sup>18</sup>In the Flash Gordon  
 494 serials, the story makes explicit that the screening devices work as shown. So,  
 495 we go along with this feature of Flash’s screen, just as we go along with the  
 496 idea, in other stories, that there are wizards that can perform magic, there are  
 497 zombies that are dead and alive, and so on (Carroll 2006: 181).

498 In short, critics charge that Wilson’s defense rests on a misleading analogy  
 499 (Carroll 2006: 181). Because Flash’s screening device is explicitly introduced  
 500 to work as represented, we do not take issue with it. We suspend “default real-  
 501 ism” and do not expend energy worrying about it. However, no one clues us  
 502 into the implicit narrator: it is, after all, an implicit feature of the narration, not  
 503 explicit. So, we cannot fend off worries about how the cinematic operator with  
 504 the thought “just accept the filmmaker says this is how things work” (Carroll  
 505 2006: 125). Because there is not, in other words, an exceptions clause for the  
 506 cinematic narrator, the Realistic Heuristic licenses us to imaginatively fill in the  
 507 implications of its presence in the story world (Carroll 2006: 181).

508 Thus, the debate between Wilson and his critics concerns whether the ques-  
 509 tions that critics ask about the operation of Wilson’s version of the implicit  
 510 cinematic narrator are “silly” ones to ask. This is the question we examine in  
 511 the next section.

### 512 *Part V: Reconsidering the Objection from Absurd Imaginings*

513 To review, by far, the most serious objection that friends of the implicit cine-  
 514 matic narrator face is the concern about absurd imaginings. This question dogs  
 515 all versions of the cinematic narrator we have discussed. In response to this  
 516 problem, Chatman maintained that questions about how the narrator comes to  
 517 have its knowledge are “non-questions” (Chatman 1990: 130). Levinson had  
 518 to fend off Kania’s concern that it is not possible to say a fictional narrator is  
 519 our guide to the story’s sights and sounds without embarrassing questions  
 520 about the narrator following. Also, Wilson faces the objection that his *Mediating*  
 521 *Imagined Seeing* thesis cannot avoid the sort of absurdities that have plagued  
 522 other formulations of imagined seeing. The question we must now, then, try to  
 523 sort out is whether the critics’ questions about the cinematic narrator are legiti-  
 524 mate ones to ask.

525 Concerns about improbabilities in works of fiction go back to Aristotle’s  
 526 *Poetics*, where he said that ideally there should be no improbabilities in the plot  
 527 (*Poetics* 1460b27). Drama is an imitation of human action and life. Dramas  
 528 that have improbable incidents, especially in the plot, undermine the sense that  
 529 goings on in the drama work as they do in real life. For things in real life obey

<sup>18</sup> Gaut (2004: 245), Carroll (2006: 181, 2016: 120).

cause and effect, and the audience's emotional response to the story depends on their making a connection between the fiction and everyday life. Thus, plays that build to a narrative resolution by having a deus ex machina solution, such as Medea improbably spirited away in a chariot at the last minute, are to be avoided, unless there is some overriding reason to include them (*Poetics* 15.1454a37). Also, when the poet must include them, to achieve a certain effect, the artist should find ways to de-emphasize them, for instance, by including them in the "backstory" of the larger story world from which the play draws, and not as part of the events that are dramatized in front of the audience on the stage (*Poetics* 15.1454b5-7).

Kendall Walton voices similar ideas when he advances the "Reality Principle" (Walton 1990:144–151). To comprehend and appreciate the story, we must "fill in: a great deal of information that is not explicitly represented."<sup>19</sup> The Reality Principle directs an appreciator of fiction to "fill in" or infer from what is explicitly presented in the fiction, based on the idea that the fictional world operates as the real world does. So, for example, to appreciate the Harry Potter stories and movies, we have to infer things that the novel does not explicitly introduce: even though Harry is a wizard and can perform magic, in every other relevant respect, Harry is like ordinary "muggles"—he is not immortal, has parents, and so on. Thus, Walton's "Reality Principle" is very much like Carroll and Gaut's "Realistic Heuristic."

One might say that, in general, the Realistic Heuristic, the idea that we fill what is true in the fiction according to how things work in real life, is sound. For an important, if not universally accepted, way of thinking about fiction is that it is capable of affecting a change in the audience's view of themselves and the world.<sup>20</sup> To do so, works of fiction must present representations of human action that are broadly realistic and true to life, unless things are specified otherwise in the story (for instance, Flash Gordon's viewing screen or magic in the world of Harry Potter).

Further, there is an important practical reason for assuming that the Reality Principle holds. It is just not possible for an author or filmmaker to fill out everything that is true in the story world she creates for the reader or viewer. To do so would run the risk of distracting from the appreciation of what is essential and relevant to know and what is not. Instead, with the Reality Principle, the creator of the fiction can leave certain fictional truths implicit, and we use how things work in the real world to fill in information about the story world. When the story world departs from the real world, this exception can be explicitly introduced. So, the Reality Principle provides a practical way for the appreciator of a fictional work to "fill out" the story world, without leaving the contents of the story world mostly unspecified (Gaut 2004: 245).

<sup>19</sup>The problem of just what an appreciator of fiction "fills in" as she comprehends a story is a subject of great debate. See, for example, Lewis (1978), Beardsley (1981: 242–247), Walton (1990: 144–161), Lamarque (1990), and Lorand (2001).

<sup>20</sup>Catherine Wilson (2004), Elisabeth Schellenkens (2007).

570 In response, Wilson is likely to insist that there are paradoxes and inconsis-  
 571 tencies at the base of many fictional narratives. A prime example that Wilson  
 572 gives comes from the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. It is fictional that Huck,  
 573 a barely literate young man who goes stir crazy when he sits for too long, wrote  
 574 the 300-page memoir about his adventures (Wilson 1997: 309). If we ask how  
 575 this could be, we would get tangled up in imagining absurd scenarios that dis-  
 576 tract from our proper appreciation of the story. Wilson suggests we are just not  
 577 meant to imagine the implications of how such a narrative feat is possible, and  
 578 so the Realistic Heuristic is blocked. We need not imagine all the implications  
 579 of how Huck could have crafted the tale. In other words, we should not expend  
 580 energy worrying about the embarrassing questions about the cinematic narra-  
 581 tor/fictional shower because they have no answer within the world of the story,  
 582 and so they are silly questions to ask (Wilson 1997: 308–9; Wilson 2011: 48).

583 It might appear that we have arrived at a stalemate or impasse between phi-  
 584 losophers on both sides of the debate. However, we might make headway by  
 585 looking more closely at some of the examples that are often given of silly ques-  
 586 tions to ask. If these paradigm examples are like, in relevant respects, questions  
 587 one might ask about the cinematic narrator, then Wilson’s argument might be  
 588 plausible. On the other hand, if the agreed upon examples are not sufficiently  
 589 like asking questions about the cinematic narrator, then we might have some  
 590 reason for thinking that Wilson’s response to his critics is not plausible.

591 Centrally, the silly questions that Walton considers to be inappropriate are  
 592 so because it is wrong to seek an answer in the world of the fiction. Instead, we  
 593 find the answer outside the story world, by considering the generic conven-  
 594 tions that govern the art form in question. For example, the audience at the  
 595 opera does not ask why it is that the characters in opera often spend their last  
 596 moments singing, while they are passing away in excruciating pain! (Walton  
 597 1990: 177). Only someone who was ignorant of the conventions of opera, as a  
 598 particular art form, would ask this question. Further, it is fictional in the play,  
 599 *The Belle of Amherst*, that the character, Emily Dickinson, is shy and retiring, a  
 600 person of few words. However, the actor who impersonates Dickinson has  
 601 many lines and commands the attention of the audience (Walton 1990: 176).  
 602 It is silly or inappropriate to ask why a quiet person is talking so much and  
 603 expect the answer to be found within the terms of the story. The conventions  
 604 and nature of a play of this sort require that the character talk a lot to convey  
 605 the poet’s thoughts and feelings.

606 In these types of cases, as Greg Currie notes, there is no one-to-one corre-  
 607 spondence between the features of the representation, for instance, of Othello  
 608 and the features that Othello has in the story world (Currie 2010: 59). That is,  
 609 a well-informed spectator of theater understands that the poetic speeches that  
 610 Othello offers, for example, do not reflect a quality in the character of Othello,  
 611 but are there instead to stir the emotions with the beauty and eloquence of the  
 612 quality of the language. As Currie puts it, “While the words uttered by the  
 613 actor constitute great poetry, they are not represented as representing great  
 614 poetry in the mouth of the character” (Currie 2010: 60).

Generalizing from these examples, we can explain why the questions one could raise in these cases are inappropriate ones to ask. A question is a silly one, in these cases, to ask, provided the answer is not found within the terms of the fiction but instead is explained by the nature of the genre of the artwork and its associated conventions.

We can also see how accepting that these cases involve silly questions is compatible with holding our imaginings about fiction are, in general, governed by the Realistic Heuristic. It is not given as true *in the fiction* that Othello is a fine poet or speechmaker: this is a feature of how Othello is represented due to the artistic requirements of Shakespeare's plays. As such, we are not mandated to imagine the implications for what is true in the story world when Othello makes a beautiful speech. Similarly, we are not required to infer what follows from imagining that barely literate Huck Finn authors a 300-page memoir. We understand it is Mark Twain's words that are the source of the fictional memoir, not Huck Finn's, because fictional narratives have to be crafted by actual authors. So, we understand that we do not need to infer what follows for the story world if we imagine that we are reading a lengthy fictional memoir that Huck pens.

Now what follows for the debate between Wilson and his critics over the absurd imaginings? Recall that on Wilson's *Mediated Imagined Seeing* thesis, when we watch a movie, we are to imagine that we are watching a recording of the story events taken from within the fictional world. Critics ask, how was such a recording made? How could there be a recording of events if the story is set in a time before the camera was invented? And, further, if we suppose that some naturally occurring camera is the source of the shots we are seeing, what are we to imagine about point-of-view shots? How can naturally occurring cameras get inside people's heads? Are the questions that his critics pose silly ones to ask?

Recall that according to Wilson's *Mediated Imagined Seeing*, we are to imagine that it is *true in the story world* that such a recording was made. For recalling the Ontological Gap Argument, the narrator or narrating device has to be imagined to be part of the fictional world in order for us to imagine that what we are seeing is a recording taking place from *within* the story world. The objection then is that once we imagine a recording takes place in the world of the fiction, we must imagine what follows from this, in accordance with the Realistic Heuristic. But when imagine what follows from the presence of a recording of the story events, absurd imaginings follow.

Wilson insists that to seek answers to these questions is inappropriate. But our examination of some central cases of silly question pertaining to fiction suggests that the questions about how the recording comes about *are* legitimate ones to ask. For we said that there is no reason to think that it is *true in the fiction* that Huck is a literate or capable of sitting still long enough to write a 300-page memoir. And there is no reason to think it is true in the fiction that Othello, a brash man of action, makes beautiful speeches, and so on with the other examples we looked at. But Wilson would have us imagine that it is true

660 in the fiction that there is a recording of the story events or fictional facts. This  
 661 means, as Wilson's critics charge, that once we suppose that the implicit narra-  
 662 tor (or minimal narrating agency) is part of the fictional world, it is reasonable  
 663 to fill in the implications of its presence there. And when we do, we get tangled  
 664 up in the embarrassing questions about the cinematic narrator that we have  
 665 rehearsed in this section.<sup>21</sup>

666 *Conclusion: Further Issues for Cinematic Narration*

667 *If* we are skeptics about imagined seeing as the way movies work on us as view-  
 668 ers, is there another way to explain the phenomena to which Wilson's work  
 669 draws our attention? For Wilson is insistent that any account of how movie  
 670 narratives engage our imagination will need to address the way in which view-  
 671 ers at the movies describe their experiences as that it is "as if" they are seeing  
 672 segments of the story world. A concern with explaining the impression that we  
 673 are making perceptual contact with the story world also clearly motivates  
 674 Levinson's Ontological Gap Argument. But explaining our engagement with  
 675 movies in terms of imagined perceptual relations faces problems, as we have  
 676 seen. How might we undertake to explain how film as a distinctively visual  
 677 form of storytelling works on us, the viewers?

678 Greg Currie proposes that we distinguish visual fictions from nonvisual fic-  
 679 tion by how film narration determines or conveys the story content. Currie  
 680 uses the term "perceptual imagining" to mark out the distinctive kind of imag-  
 681 ining movies prompt in viewers (Currie 1991: 140, 1995a, b: Chapter 6).  
 682 When a viewer watches a movie, it is the viewer's actual perception of a visual  
 683 image that prompts her imagining the story's contents. In visual fictions, the  
 684 viewer's imagining of story events is then counterfactually dependent on look-  
 685 ing at images.<sup>22</sup>

686 Noël Carroll discusses the distinct perceptual and cognitive faculties that  
 687 movie narration engages, as a form of pictorial comprehension (Carroll 2008:  
 688 108–115). Movies present familiar scenes and characters even if they are ones  
 689 the filmmaker makes up. Thus, movies mobilize the same capacity for object  
 690 recognition that we employ in everyday life. Therefore, one might say that the  
 691 "Recognition Prompt" view can explain why viewers report that their experi-  
 692 ence is "as if" they see the characters in real life, without positing they stand in  
 693 an imagined perceptual relation to them. What they are reporting is a sense of  
 694 recognition of something previously encountered in perception, not an imag-  
 695 ined seeing of them.

696 A further possibility is to hold that the notion that viewers at the movies  
 697 look at the moving pictures on the screen and "see in" to them the characters

<sup>21</sup> See also Curran (2016: 103–106).

<sup>22</sup> Wilson remains open to the possibility that what he means by "imagined seeing" at the movies is what Currie means by perceptual imagining. See Wilson (2011: 75–76). Currie revisits his views about imagined seeing at the movies in Currie (2018).

and situations that the image depicts (Wollheim 2008: 217–238; Hopkins 698  
 2008, 2016). Seeing in is not an imagined seeing of characters but a seeing in 699  
 which one thing (a movie shot of Ingrid Bergman) is taken as a representation 700  
 of another (Ilsa Lund). The virtue of “seeing-in” is that it can account for the 701  
 role that perception plays in imagining story content, while also being able to 702  
 explain how the viewer can appreciate the properties of the moving shot as an 703  
 image or representation (Stecker 2013: 153–4).<sup>23</sup> 704

## CONCLUSION 705

Cinematic narration is the way in which movies tell their stories to an audience. 706  
 The overall question we have looked at here is how do movies work on us so 707  
 that we come to imagine the story events? There are two broad areas of conten- 708 [AUDIO](#)  
 tion. The first concerns whether to comprehend what is true in the story— 709  
 we need to imagine a fictional presenter who reports or shows that things are 710  
 so in the story. Alternatively, is the Imagination Account of Fiction right that 711  
 we comprehend the story in virtue of the actual filmmaker’s mandate to imag- 712  
 ine things are thus and so in the story? The second concerns whether audiences 713  
 at the movies standardly imagine seeing the characters and story events. Or do 714  
 we instead imagine that certain things are so in the story world, without imag- 715  
 ining we are seeing these incidents? 716

We have seen that the issue of how we imaginatively “fill in” the implications 717  
 of what is explicitly the case in the fiction is central to resolving both issues. An 718  
 exciting line of further inquiry is whether the Imagination Account of Fiction 719  
 can offer a complete answer to how viewers comprehend a story. If the argu- 720  
 ment in this chapter is correct, there is sufficient reason to hope it can do so. 721

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<sup>23</sup>For Wilson’s view on imagined seeing as “seeing in” look at Wilson (2013: 167–168).

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# Author Queries

Chapter No.: 5      0004388390

Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	Please check the hierarchy of the section headings and confirm if correct.	
AU2	Carroll (1996, 2005), Currie (1990, 1991), Booth (1961), Nehamas (1981), Matravers (2014, 2010), Wilson (1936, 2003), Wollhein (2008), Livingston (2005), Beardsley (1980), Elisabeth Schellenkens (2007), Currie (2018), Thomson-Jones (2007), Williams (1976), Currie (2018) were mentioned in text but not in the reference list. Please provide its bibliographic information.	
AU3	Please check if the below list paragraphs were aligned correctly.	
AU4	List numbers under 'Stage Two (Chatman 1990: 133–4)' were renumbered to maintain sequential order. Please confirm.	
AU5	We have changed "Currie 1995" to "Currie 1995a, b" as per the reference list. Please check if this is fine or please specify "1995a" or "1995b" here and in other occurrences.	
AU6	In the sentence "But in principle, we see how..." should the name Matraver be changed to Matravers?	
AU7	Please check the edit to the sentence "For instance, perceptual imagining..."	
AU8	The citation "Beardsley 1981" has been changed to "Beardsley 1981" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine.	
AU9	Please check sentence "But when...imaginings follow" for clarity.	
AU10	Please check if edit to sentence "The overall...story events?" is okay.	
AU11	Only editor names are provided in reference "Gaut (1997)". Please provide appropriate book title and publisher details to the reference.	
AU12	Only editor names are provided in reference "Levinson (1996)". Please provide appropriate book title and publisher details to the reference.	
AU13	Only editor names are provided in reference "Livingston (1997)". Please provide appropriate book title and publisher details to the reference.	
AU14	Please provide published year for reference "Matravers".	
AU15	Published year has been retained from text citation to respective references "Pye (2013), Lamarque (1990), Lorand (2001), Lewis (1978), McGinn (2005)". Please confirm.	
AU16	Please provide volume number and page range for reference Walton (2002).	

AU17	Please provide published year and editor details for reference Williams.	
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