

The caped crusader unmasked! It's... Anna

Karenina?!

1. Introduction

There are things, like Pegasus, Anna Karenina and Batman, that we can think about but that don't exist, or at any rate, don't make their presence felt in the world in the manner of real horses, adulteresses and masked vigilantes. I will assume that this is strictly and literally true. For Tim Crane it is a 'truism' (Crane 2013 p3), a starting point for any adequate account of intentionality. Of course, there are alleged truisms that have been flat out denied, and I don't doubt that many readers will feel that this one deserves the same treatment. There are *no such things* as Batman and Pegasus, they will insist. And the concession that there are no such *real* or *existent* or *concrete* things won't placate them.

Accounts of thought and talk, as it were, 'about fictional and imaginary entities' that attempt to quantify over non-existent or non-concrete items are questionably coherent. But I want to assume that there are such 'exotic' (Sainsbury 2010) items as Batman, Pegasus and Anna Karenina for the purposes of developing

the most defensible account that makes this assumption. It may be that even the most defensible account is indefensible: that the attempt to come up with a coherent account of fictional and imaginary entities is doomed to failure. But failure can be instructive.

I will try to learn from the failures but also build on the genuine insights of extant accounts. A key insight – perhaps *the* key insight – is Meinong's contention that the totality of what there is, is not exhausted by the totality of what exists. I will follow Meinong in counting Batman, Hamlet and Miss Jean Brodie as *non-existent objects*. I acknowledge the need to explain the dubiously coherent notion of 'non-existent object', and after laying some groundwork I will get around to meeting this need: in section 5 I will give an account of existence and non-existence, and I will defend Meinong's insight against the objection that fictional characters like Batman, because they have been *created*, exist.

Meinong was right but Meinong was also wrong; and the first thing I will do is explain how. In section 2 I will argue, following Thomasson (1999), Salmon (1998) and Crane (2013), and contra Meinong and Meinongians like Parsons (1980), that Pegasus and Hamlet are not the types of entities we imagine them to be: horses and humans. I will maintain that according to a suitably sparse sense of 'quality' - that discounts predicates like 'is thought about by Meinong' and 'is non-square' as standing for qualities because sharing a quality always makes for objective similarity - Hamlet lacks *any* qualities.

Crane goes further than this, maintaining not only that Hamlet lacks anything that this sparse conception of qualities counts as qualities, but that Hamlet doesn't

stand in relations. In section 3 I will argue that Hamlet *does* stand in relations: Hamlet is self-identical, and Hamlet is the referent of 'Hamlet'. But the only (atomic) facts about Hamlet are such relational facts. Hamlet, lacking any intrinsic qualitative character, is properly considered a *bare particular*.

The notion of 'bare particular' - which I will explicate, to the extent that this is possible, in section 4 - is almost as controversial as the notion of 'non-existent object'. But the former notion gives a handle on the latter notion. Having explained both notions I will be in position to elaborate - in section 6 - an account of fictional entities as non-existent bare particulars - bare objects of thought - emphasising the departures from but also the affinities to the best extant accounts of fictional entities.

Bare particularism about fictional entities avoids the objectionable consequences of these other accounts but it does have a consequence that some may find challenging. We may not be in a position to know whether Pegasus is a distinct fictional entity to Hermione Granger, whether Batman is really Anna Karenina.... There is a fact of the matter how many fictional entities there are but it is something we can never know. I mention this consequence already at this point so that you can get used to it. It is challenging but it is not so very hard to accept if the reasons for positing merely fictional entities are kept clearly in mind. The posits made by accounts of fictional entities are explanatory posits; what needs to be explained is the possibility of thought about, so to speak, Hamlet and Hermione Granger, and reference to these items. The conventions of engagement with their respective fictions require that we treat Batman and Anna Karenina as distinct, but do not

require that they really are distinct. All that is required is enough referents and objects of thought for our talk and thought about fictional entities and *one* may be enough.

2. Fictional entities lack qualities

Meinong was right to ‘attempt a theoretical understanding of the Object as such’ (Meinong 1960 p78) that accommodates *non-existent objects*. But Meinong was wrong about the nature of non-existent objects. Pegasus, contra Meinong, is not really a horse. Meinongianism’s ‘characterisation principle’ (CP) (Priest 2005 p83) has it that non-existent objects have the qualities they are imagined/represented to have. Meinong’s principle of independence of being and so-being has it that non-existence is no bar to the possession of qualities like *being a horse*. I will argue that these core tenets of Meinongianism are mistaken.

I will first consider the reasons for endorsing CP. One reason is that CP allows for the accommodation of ‘intuitive truths’ like ‘Pegasus is a horse’, ‘Hamlet is Danish’ and ‘Batman is Gotham’s dark knight’. In order to assess this reason I need to take a step back and pose a question. What is the purpose of giving an account of fictional entities? The answer, as I have already flagged above, is that the purpose is to explain the *possibility* of talk and thought about, so to speak, merely fictional entities. Realist accounts of fictional entities allow for this thought and talk to be handled by simple, straightforward accounts of reference and intentionality.

Theoretical simplicity is paid for by some ontological extravagance.

The purpose of giving an account of fictional entities is *not* to accommodate all of the intuitive claims about fictional entities. Consider two intuitive claims: ‘Batman is the creation of Bob Kane’ and ‘Batman doesn’t exist’. On the face of it creating something involves bringing it into existence and so these claims contradict each other and so *can’t* be accommodated by a single theory.

The goal is not to accommodate all intuitive claims. But even the goal of accommodating as many intuitive claims as possible¹ is misguided if no distinction is made between those intuitive claims that survive reflection, and those that don’t. In the case of some intuitive claims a minimum of reflection – without the guidance of any sophisticated theorising about fictional entities - reveals a better explanation of their intuitiveness than the explanation that they are literally true: these claims are acceptable within the scope of a pretence, or true when implicitly prefixed with an ‘according to the fiction’ operator.

The intuitiveness of ‘Pegasus is a horse’ and ‘Hamlet is Danish’ can be explained after such a fashion. ‘Pegasus is a horse’, ‘Hamlet is Danish’ and ‘Batman is Gotham’s dark knight’ are alleged intuitive truths that don’t survive reflection. Predications to merely fiction entities of the qualities we imagine them to have aren’t intuitively *true*. They are intuitively acceptable but not intuitively true.²

¹ Cf Berto (2011, p314) ‘...we adopt as a general methodological maxim that a theory of fictional objects should depart from the literal reading of fictional discourse only to the extent that such reading appears to be absurd, blatantly false, or incoherent when taken at face value.’ As it happens Berto goes on to deny the literal truth of claims like ‘Pegasus is a horse’. One might understand ‘at face value’ in such a way that the literal reading of ‘Pegasus is a horse’ is blatantly false even at face value. But even if Berto hasn’t contravened his own maxim, the maxim seems unmotivated. Given that fictional discourse is *fictional* discourse, why should there be any onus, even a defeasible one, to take it as literally true?

² The intuitiveness of cross fictional comparisons (‘Holmes is cleverer than Poirot’ and real world-fictional comparisons (‘Secretariat was nearly as fast as Pegasus’) are also easily explained by invoking pretence (See Walton 1990 p407).

Are there any exceptions to this rule?³ What about ‘the Greeks and Romans worshipped the same gods’? It might be felt that this sober claim is literally true; but if it is literally true that the Greeks and Romans worshipped the same gods then it is literally true that Zeus and Jupiter are gods. It is not literally true though, that the Greeks and Romans worshipped the same *gods*. Unless there is a use of ‘god’ that just means ‘object of worship’: if this is the case then it can be allowed that Zeus and Jupiter are gods. But if ‘is a god’ characterises the thing that it is applied to rather than attitudes towards that thing then Zeus and Jupiter are not gods. It is important to be clear that the Greeks and Romans (those whose ‘worship’ wasn’t a cynical pretence or merely ritualistic) were mistaken in believing that their objects of worship possessed divine powers. Strictly speaking, the Greeks and the Romans worshipped the same *false gods*.

Bad reasons for endorsing CP are not in short supply. Here for example is a passage from (Linsky & Zalta 1991). Edward Zalta has clearly articulated why CP must be wrong: the reason why fictional entities cannot instantiate qualities like *being a horse* that I will set out below is Zalta’s reason. Pegasus isn’t a horse; but nonetheless Pegasus *is* a horse, Zalta insists, in some sense of ‘is’. Zalta feels the need to modify rather than simply reject CP and this passage is meant to explain why.

³ Of course ‘trivial qualities’ like self-identity and predicates like ‘is thought about by someone’ make for exceptions; and if *nonexistence* is counted a quality then Italo Calvino’s Non-existent Knight is an exception to the rule. But I mean to assert the rule using ‘quality’ in the sparse sense that I will unpack below.

...Zalta distinguishes between *exemplifying* a property and *encoding* a property. The idea behind this distinction is that some objects are composed of properties which they need not exemplify. Intentional objects are good examples of this. The ghost in John's nightmare last night is composed, in some sense, of the property of being a ghost without exemplifying it. In some important sense, this dream object 'is' a ghost, otherwise why fear it? The sense of 'is' is captured by introducing encoding as a second *mode* of predication—though nothing exemplifies the property of being a ghost, this dream object encodes it. (Linsky & Zalta 1991 p442)

'In some important sense, this dream object 'is' a ghost, otherwise why fear it?' Linsky and Zalta ask. The question 'why fear it' can be interpreted as asking why John *does* fear the dream object. It can also be interpreted as asking why John *should* fear the dream object. But John shouldn't fear the dream object: it isn't real. Even if it *encodes* ghostliness he shouldn't fear it: a Meinongian object 'composed' of properties poses no threat, unlike a real ghost composed of ectoplasm.

Why does John fear the dream object then? John fears the dream object because his dream represents it as a ghost. Imagine John mistakes Sally (approaching through the mist, dressed in white) for a ghost. Why does John fear Sally? Because he represents Sally as a ghost. John's fear of the dream object has the same explanation as his fear of Sally. In both cases the object of his fear is represented as a ghost.

I do not of course deny that fictional and imaginary objects are represented as ghosts and winged horses. *Every* realist - including creationists and other enemies of Meinongianism - will happily concede this. CP says that non-existent

objects have the properties they are represented as having. It doesn't just mean that they have these properties *according to the representations*. The question is whether an imaginary ghost is a ghost if 'is a ghost' means *more* than 'is represented as a ghost': whether the imaginary ghost *satisfies John's representation*. 'Encodes ghostliness' does mean more than 'is represented as a ghost': real, existent, concrete objects like Sally can be represented as having qualities, but Zalta insists that they can't encode qualities (Linsky & Zalta p442).

But the explanation of why John fears the dream object need only acknowledge that the dream object is represented as a ghost. The dream object need not satisfy John's representation. Linsky and Zalta have failed to give a good reason for endorsing CP.

Here is yet another bad reason. It might be felt that Meinongian theories that take non-existent objects of thought to really have the qualities they are imagined as having can offer a neat explanation of how we succeed in thinking about and referring to these items: I can think about a fictional entity and refer to that entity because I entertain a descriptive content that uniquely specifies that entity. This neat explanation however, if it is any good, obviates the need for an account of fictional entities. If there is a set of descriptive contents each of which is associated only with thoughts that are 'about Pegasus' and if there is a set of descriptive contents each of which is associated only with acts of reference that we would want to count as acts of reference to Pegasus, then do we need Pegasus? We can hold that for a thought to be 'about Pegasus' is for it to involve a member of the set of Pegasus-contents posited by this explanation, and for an act of reference to be an act

of reference 'to Pegasus' is for it to involve a member of the set of Pegasus-contents posited by this explanation.

Of course there is no descriptive content associated with only those thoughts that are about Pegasus, and only those referings that are referings to Pegasus (cf Thomasson 1999 pp83-84). The neat explanation fails. All the putative motivations for CP fail. There is no good reason to endorse this principle.

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There is a good reason for rejecting CP though: qualities 'like *being a horse* and *being Danish* are *existence/concreteness entailing*. This is why Zalta (see for example Linsky & Zalta p442) denies that Meinongian objects *instantiate* qualities. The objection is also pressed by Priest, Crane and others. Being a horse involves manifesting oneself in the world in a certain way and something that lacks concrete existence *thereby* fails to manifest itself in this way.

CP is indefensible, as it attributes existence entailing qualities to non-existents. And yet some who acknowledge this still seek to defend a modified version of the principle. The thrust of the arguments of this section so far has been to show that there is no motivation for CP. It should be abandoned, not merely modified. But let me briefly consider attempts to modify it, starting with Zalta's 'encoding Meinongianism.'

Zalta's modified version of CP has it that fictional entities 'encode' the qualities they are represented as having. He stipulates that for every set of qualities

there is an object that is ‘composed, in some sense’ of those qualities. I have shown that the reason Linsky and Zalta give for endorsing the former claim is not a good reason. But I am willing to grant the latter claim. For every set of qualities there *is* an object that can be said to be ‘composed, in some sense’ of those qualities: the *representation* as of an object with those qualities. A representation of an object can be thought of as an object in its own right: an abstract object that in some special way involves all the qualities⁴ the represented object is represented as having.

My contention is that the ‘Meingongian objects’ posited by Zalta are best understood not as the objects we think about and talk about when we think and talk about fictional entities, but rather as the representations we use to think and talk about these things. Zalta stipulates that for every set of qualities there is just one object that encodes the qualities. That fits with my interpretation. Representations are individuated by the qualities they represent objects as having. Same qualities, same representation; but not same qualities, same object.

My point is that if we are to posit encoding Meinongianism’s ‘abstract’/‘Meinongian’ objects and find a role for them in the explanation of thought and talk about fictional entities, the obvious role is as *intentional contents* rather than *intentional objects*: that is as representations of fictional entities rather than as fictional entities themselves. You might of course choose to deny that our thoughts about fictional entities have intentional objects *in addition* to intentional contents. But that would make you an anti-realist. Realism about fictional entities requires an

⁴ If only by being composed (in a more usual sense) of representations of those qualities.

account of these putative items appropriate to these putative items, rather than to what for realists is a distinct category of items.

If encoding Meinongianism was a cogent account of fictional entities Zalta's version of CP would be motivated at least by whatever theoretical virtues attend the theory that incorporates it; but encoding Meinongianism *should not be seen as any sort of account of fictional entities*. I am not contesting the merits of Zalta's notion of encoding and his 'theory of abstract objects' as a theory of *other* phenomena. But Zalta's version of CP - a principle intended to pertain to fictional entities - is lacking any support.

The second attempt to modify CP that I will consider is that of 'modal Meinongians' Graham Priest and Francesco Berto. According to modal Meinongianism⁵ (Priest 2005, Berto 2008, 2011, Berto & Priest 2014) fictional entities actually lack existence entailing qualities, but they have the qualities they are characterised as having in other possible and (in many cases) impossible worlds.

What we make of this proposal depends on what we make of these other worlds. What are they? We must be careful to distinguish the 'worlds' of Priest's 'worlds semantics' - which are mathematical items (cf. Priest 2005 p138) - from what they represent. The success of worlds semantics in modelling intentional states does not depend on there being real items *like the actual world* corresponding to the 'worlds' of the mathematical model (cf Priest 2005 p138). 'Ersatz worlds' would suffice.

Thinking of possible and impossible worlds as real items like the actual world - as David Lewis thinks of possible worlds - brings problems. It brings a problem for Priest's contention that the other worlds he posits are 'non-existent objects' (Priest 2005, cf Priest 2008a pp30-31). If qualities like being *massive* and *being a horse* are existence entailing, then aggregates whose parts have such qualities exist no less than those parts. Thinking of *impossible* worlds that are not just ersatz worlds but are things just like and therefore ontologically on a par with the real world, also brings problems. Real impossible worlds are a *big* problem.

What could the other worlds be, if not items like this world? Are they representations or something of this sort? The trouble – for modal Meinongians – with this suggestion is that it requires that for Pegasus to have the quality of being a horse at some other world is for Pegasus to have that quality *according to a representation*. But as noted above, every realist agrees that Pegasus is represented as a horse. The principle that non-existents have the existence entailing qualities they are characterised as having in other worlds – if this is what this principle amounts to – is a trivial consequence of the admission of non-existent objects of representations. But CP was not supposed to be a trivial principle.

The dilemma for modal Meinongianism boils down to this. Either modal Meinongians must posit real impossible worlds, or modal Meinongianism must grant that there is no principle that is non-trivial (for realists) linking non-existent objects with the existence entailing qualities they are characterised as having. If they embrace the second horn of the dilemma they will end up very close

⁵ The name 'modal Meinongianism' was coined by Berto (2008). Priest originally called his view

to the account that this paper advocates: bare particularism. Just how close they will be to bare particularism depends on what they are willing to count as existence entailing qualities.

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I will take the Meinongian picture of non-existents – which has CP at its heart – to be refuted. But my goal in this section is not just to undermine the Meinongian picture of non-existents and non-existence. I want to lay the groundwork for an alternative picture: bare particularism. It is to this end that I will take up the question ‘what properties are existence entailing?’ Priest suggests that spatiotemporal properties are existence entailing. This is surely right but I will go farther. If there are *abstract* non-spatiotemporal objects that yet possess genuine natures of their own, their existence shouldn’t be denied. For Meinong so-being – suchness – precedes existence. That is the import of the Principle of Independence. I want to suggest that the opposite is the case. Existence precedes suchness. *All* qualities are existence entailing.

All qualities, that is, according to a suitably sparse conception of qualities. According to an abundant conception of qualities, every meaningful predicate stands for a quality. I don’t wish to claim that no meaningful predicates apply to non-existents. The contention that existence precedes suchness is not the trivially false proposal that Nathan Salmon dismisses....

‘noneism’.

Undoubtedly, existence is a prerequisite for a very wide range of ordinary properties But the sweeping doctrine that existence universally precedes suchness has very clear counterexamples in which an object from one circumstance has properties in another circumstance in virtue of the properties it has in the original circumstance. Socrates does not exist in my present circumstance, yet he has numerous properties here—for example, being mentioned and discussed by me. (Salmon 1998, p290f)

On an abundant conception of qualities ‘being mentioned and discussed by me’ stands for a quality – a suchness. But according to a sparse sense of ‘quality’ this predicate doesn’t stand for a quality. ‘On a sparse conception the sharing of properties always makes for genuine similarity’ (Bricker 1996, p471). But the things mentioned and discussed by me are a miscellaneous collection: they don’t all resemble each other.

There is more than one sparse conception of qualities. In keeping with the thought that abstract objects can have genuine natures of their own I am reluctant to endorse a ‘scientific’ conception (Schaffer 2004, p92) according to which the sparse properties are those invoked by ‘science’ (unless ‘science’ is taken very broadly), and I am also reluctant to endorse the competing ‘fundamental’ conception (Schaffer 2004, pp92-93) according to which the only properties are those that provide, without any redundancy, a ‘minimal’ ontological base. This assumes *there is no redundancy* and it rules out many candidates that seem to ground genuine resemblances.

I will avoid giving hostages to fortune and instead hold fast to the basic insight that qualities ground genuine similarities/objective resemblances (cf Schaffer 2004, p94). I will thus define a ‘quality’ according to the sparse sense I wish to invoke as a way things are or can be that grounds genuine resemblances between its instances.

This definition makes qualities (monadic properties) intrinsic. It rules out ‘relational qualities’ (qualities got by ‘plugging up’ relations). ‘Is due east of Greenwich,’ ‘is thought about by Meinong’ and ‘is self-identical’ do not stand for ways things are or can be that ground genuine resemblances between their instances.⁶ It also rules out ‘negative qualities’: a triangle and a doughnut do not resemble each other on account of being non-square. ‘Doesn’t exist’, then, doesn’t stand for a quality, nor does ‘is (merely) fictional’, which I take to mean ‘is mentioned in a fiction and doesn’t exist’. This definition also rules out many (if not all) ‘disjunctive qualities’: the triangle and the doughnut do not resemble each other on account of satisfying ‘is either triangular or doughnut-shaped’.

This sparse sense of ‘quality’ makes sharing a quality a *sufficient* condition for resemblance, but not a necessary condition. If there are bare particulars – objects that lack any qualities – then there may be a limit case of resemblance. Bare particulars, it might be thought, genuinely resemble each other; but they lack any

⁶ What about *haecceities*? If the haecceity of Plato is defined as the property of being identical to Plato then this doesn’t count as a quality according to the conception of qualities under consideration. Of course the advocates of haecceities typically claim that the haecceity of Plato is not so *defined*. It is a *primitive thisness*. As argued in author (article date) if individuals themselves are primitive there is no need to posit primitive thisnesses. As a bare particularist who takes individuals – substrata – to be primitive I thus refuse to posit primitive thisnesses.

qualities. I would suggest that if bare particulars resemble each other then this resemblance is *not grounded by anything*.

This sparse conception of ‘quality’ or something like it is needed, *in any event*, by the bare particular theory (cf. Sider 2006, p394-395): to rule out qualities that every particular trivially possesses. But of course it is not just those enamoured of bare particulars who acknowledge the distinction between predicates that stand for qualities according to this conception – ‘genuine suchnesses’ let me call them – and predicates that don’t.⁷

If ‘suchness’ means genuine suchness then Salmon’s ‘very clear counterexamples’ are not counterexamples to the thesis that existence precedes suchness. The doctrine I am recommending does not insist that no predicates can apply to non-existents. It insists that *genuine suchnesses* are existence entailing. So is any property in some wider sense of the word whose possession depends on the possession of a genuine suchness. The doctrine that existence precedes suchness evidently – once it is clarified – is not refutable by clear counterexamples. I want to recommend this principle for your consideration. In section 5 I will elaborate a theory of existence that incorporates the principle and explains why it is true.

3. Fictional entities stand in relations

⁷ This distinction has more independent support, obviously, than the distinctions between predicates/types of predication made by other realists about fictional entities (e.g. Parsons’ distinction between ‘nuclear’ and ‘extranuclear’ predicates (unless it amounts to much the same thing) and Zalta’s two modes of predication).

Merely fictional horses and detectives are not horses and detectives. But they are not nothing. I am assuming there are such things. Tim Crane appears to share this assumption – he is willing to quantify over merely fictional entities - and while he attributes ‘properties’ like ‘being famous’ to fictional entities like Holmes, Crane doesn’t attribute to Holmes any ‘property’ that counts as a genuine suchness. In key respects Crane’s account of fictional entities resembles the account I am arguing for: bare particularism. But there is a significant difference.

Crane denies that fictional entities stand in ‘real relations’. Reference is a real relation, so Crane denies that ‘Hamlet’ refers to Hamlet. And identity is a real relation, so Crane denies that Hamlet is identical to Hamlet. When I say that there are objects that don’t exist, for instance Hamlet, I take ‘Hamlet’ to refer to an element of the domain of quantification. When Crane says the same thing, he doesn’t take ‘Hamlet’ to refer to anything, and he understands, or claims to understand quantification in a ‘non-committing’ way. What does this mean? Crane doesn’t endorse a substitutional account of quantification. He agrees that if ‘there are Fs’ is true then the domain of quantification contains an item that satisfies ‘F’. But this explanation of the semantics of ‘there are Fs’, he holds, is itself non-committing. Let me quote:

The semantics for the quantifiers in a given language will be given in a metalanguage, and the domains will standardly be introduced by metalanguage quantifiers. There is no semantic or logical obstacle to seeing these quantifiers as ‘non-committing’ just as the object-language quantifiers are (Crane 2013, p37).

In denying that quantifying over Fs commits him to Fs Crane is clearly denying Quine's criterion of Ontological commitment. Perhaps he is right: if being committed to an item is being committed to its *existence* (or 'being' if this is understood as some lesser grade of existence). Fictional entities, I agree, lack existence. The most I want to say is that these items are available to be quantified over. But I also want to say that Hamlet is identical to Hamlet. Either Hamlet and Pegasus are different objects or they are one and the same. And I also want to say that we can refer to Hamlet and Pegasus.

My argument⁸ that we can refer to Hamlet assumes that 'Hamlet is famous' is true: strictly and literally. Crane also assumes this. But if 'Hamlet is famous' is true, then this is because the object referred to by 'Hamlet' satisfies 'is famous'. It is puzzling how Crane can avoid agreeing with this. Recall Crane's stance on the metalanguage in which truth and other semantic notions are explained. Given that he accepts the truth of 'some non-existent objects are famous' he must grant that the domain of quantification contains items that satisfy 'is famous'. One of these items – the one we think about when we think that Hamlet is famous - stands in the semantic relation of satisfaction to 'is famous'. Why are we forbidden from saying that it stands in the semantic relation of reference to 'Hamlet'?

Crane's 'stipulation' that reference is a 'real relation' that only relates existents forbids this. But we can employ Kripke's 'device' and posit a relation, 'schmeference', that holds between 'Hamlet' and one of the items that satisfies 'is famous' (cf Author, article date). Of course schmeference, it turns out, just is

⁸ an elaboration of comments in (author, article date)

reference. Crane, to avoid allowing that 'Hamlet' refers to Hamlet, has to reject the 'simple view of truth and predication' (Crane 2013 p21) according to which 'predication involves combining terms for objects with terms for properties and relations, and the predication is true just in case the objects have the properties or stand in those relations.' But if for 'Hamlet is famous' to be true is not for the referent of 'Hamlet' to satisfy 'is famous', what is it for 'Hamlet is famous' to be true?

Crane has an answer to the question 'what is it for 'Hamlet is famous' to be true?' But I will argue that it is not an *alternative* answer to the answer afforded by the simple view. Crane attempts to 'reduce' the truth that Hamlet is famous to a truth about people's Hamlet-representations. The ultimate explanans for the truth of 'Hamlet is famous' he insists, doesn't involve Hamlet. But there is a difference between a reductive explanation and an eliminative explanation. Crane claims to provide the former, not the latter. He doesn't deny that there is such an item as Hamlet and he doesn't deny, as an eliminativist would deny, the strict, literal truth of 'Hamlet is famous'. 'Explaining the truth of 'Hamlet is famous'' can mean two different things. Compare 'explaining the truth of 'water is transparent''. A reductive explanation might not use the name 'water'. But it doesn't thereby deny that 'water' refers. Nothing prevents the reductionist from agreeing that 'water is transparent' is true just if the element of the domain of quantification referred to by 'water' satisfies 'is transparent'. This latter explanation of the truth of 'water is transparent' is a semantic explanation that invokes semantic relations between parts of the sentence 'water is transparent' and items in the world. The reductive explanation is not in conflict with the semantic explanation. It doesn't replace the

semantic explanation. No more is Crane's reductive explanation of truths about non-existents a replacement for the 'simple' and I would suggest, obvious view of truth and predication that his position forces him to reject.⁹

I would rather not reject this simple and obvious view, and so I allow that we can refer to non-existent objects. Non-existent objects therefore can stand in relations. Reference is one relation that relates non-existents. Others include *thinking about* and other intentional relations. Crane denies that these are 'real relations'. I wish to follow Meinongians and creationists in endorsing the 'relational conception' of intentionality: the natural and simple account of intentionality that takes intentional states to relate their subjects to intentional objects, and takes some of these intentional states (those we tend to report using intentional transitive constructions like 'Putin admires Optimus Prime') to relate their subjects to individual objects rather than propositional objects.

There are some relations, of course, that non-existents cannot stand in: 'grounded' relations like *...is the same mass as...* that are grounded in the existence entailing qualities - the genuine suchnesses - of their relata.¹⁰ Intentional relations like *...thinks about...* and *...loves...* in contrast to *...has the same mass as...* are 'partially grounded' relations. Instantiating genuine suchnesses is not a prerequisite

⁹ Crane maintains that the truthmakers for truths like 'Holmes is famous' are facts that don't involve Holmes. The plausibility and bearing of this contention depends on what is the appropriate attitude towards the notion of 'truthmakers'. Fraser Macbride (2014) argues convincingly that 'there's no need to appeal to truth-makers to make sense of [the dependency of truth upon being]. The truth of a proposition is essentially determined by the interlocking semantic mechanism of reference and satisfaction which already ensures that the truth-value of a proposition depends on how things stand.'

¹⁰ See Johansson 1989 ch. 8, pp. 110-123 for an explanation of 'grounded relations': relations that are "derivable from the qualities of the relata" (Johansson 1989 p121). David Lewis uses a different name for the same category of relations: he defines a (binary) 'internal relation,' as a relation that is "determined by the two intrinsic natures of its two *relata*" (Lewis 1986 p176). Johansson reserves the term 'internal

for standing in *all* of the places in these relations. Consider love: this relation's obtaining depends on the qualities of the object that occupies the first place (the lover), but doesn't depend on anything about the object that occupies the second place. Love can be blind, in other words.

If the identity of A and B is not a matter of A and B's sharing their qualities, as the bare particular theory – more on which very shortly – maintains, then *...is distinct from...* and *...is identical to...* are examples of 'ungrounded' relations. Instantiating qualities is not a prerequisite for standing in any of the places in these relations. I see no obstacle in the way of taking Hamlet to be identical to Hamlet and to assuming that there is a fact of the matter whether Hamlet is or isn't identical to Pegasus.

4. Bare Particulars

An account of merely fictional and imaginary entities needs to be clear about what these items are not. They lack existence entailing qualities, and this, I suggest, means they lack any genuine suchnesses. They are not *substantial* things of different kinds: humans, horses, planets.... But when I think about Pegasus there is something that is the focus of my thought - something I represent as a winged horse - and there is a fact of the matter whether the object of my Pegasus-thought and the object of my Tintin-thought are one and the same. The object of my Pegasus-

relation' for "relations where it is logically impossible for the relata to exist independently of each other" (Johansson 1989 p121).

thought is self-identical and distinct from other items. It stands in relations but lacks intrinsic qualities. Can we make sense of such an object?

To do so we need the *bare particular theory*. According to the bundle theory of substances individual objects are bundles of qualities. This rules out objects without qualities. According to the neo-Aristotelian theory of substances (cf Loux 1998), objects are instances of kinds: to be this very object is to be an instance of the kind this object belongs to. So there couldn't be an object that wasn't a thing of some kind. The bare particular theory allows for quality-less objects, that is, for bare particulars.

The bare particular theory is a rival to the bundle theory and the neo-Aristotelian theory that offers rival answers to two questions: what is it for this object (this apple say) to have qualities (like roundness), and what is it for this object to be the very object it is and to be distinct from that object? The answers bare particularists give to both questions posit substrata. Object A's possession of the property *roundness* is not a matter of *roundness* being compresent with other properties (as per the bundle theory); it is a matter of the instantiation of roundness by a substratum: an item that isn't a property. Object A is identical to object A and distinct from object B not because A shares the properties of A and doesn't share the properties of B. Object A is identical to A and distinct from B because the substratum that instantiates A's properties is a primitive individual that is primitively distinct from the substratum that instantiates B's properties.

Some advocates of the bare particular theory take the substratum that – according to the bare particular theory – instantiates an object's properties, to be a

proper part (along with the properties) of the object. They thus share a presupposition with bundle theorists: that an object's qualities are proper parts of the object. They simply posit an extra proper part. But this gives rise to an objection (cf Bailey 2012). Given we would want to say that the object itself instantiates its properties, it seems we have two things in the same vicinity that instantiate the same properties.

Defenders of the bare particular theory do better (cf author, article date) to deny that an object's substratum or its properties are parts of the object. They do better to *identify* the object and its substratum. An apple's substratum is the apple. Insofar as it instantiates the apple's (that is to say, its) qualities it is a clothed particular. But this view merits the name 'bare particular theory' because it holds that being object A – being identical to that object - doesn't involve having any particular set of qualities. The theory doesn't rule out A's having any qualities and it doesn't rule out A's having no qualities.

5. Non-existent objects

The object of my Pegasus-thought doesn't exist. I want to further explicate the account of fictional entities as bare particulars by explaining what it is for these items to fail to exist. Drawing on Moreland (1998, pp260-261), on (Author, article date) and on Kant, my explanation is that for an object to fail to exist is just for it to be a bare particular!

I have suggested that existence precedes suchness: the possession of at least one quality is a sufficient condition for existing. It is also, I suggest, a necessary condition. Try to imagine an object coming into existence without any quality coming to be instantiated. This is not a coherent scenario. If the possession of at least one quality is both necessary and sufficient for existing, then non-existent objects are bare particulars and bare particulars are non-existent objects.

The account of existence I am advocating – according to which the possession of qualities is a necessary and sufficient condition for existence - can be developed along lines suggested by this thought from Kant:

The determinations of a substance, which are nothing but special ways in which it exists, are called accidents. If we ascribe a special existence to this real in substance (for instance, to motion, as an accident of matter), this existence is called inherence, in distinction from the existence of substance, which is entitled subsistence. But this occasions many misunderstandings; *it is more exact and more correct to describe an accident as being simply the way in which the existence of a substance is positively determined.* (Kant 1965 A186-87/B229/30) ¹¹

This remark suggests a way of understanding ‘exists’¹². The predicate ‘exists’ doesn’t itself stand for a quality, if qualities are *specific* ways that things are. But it resembles predicates like ‘is coloured’ which apply in virtue of the instantiation of some property or other. ‘Exists’ is *determinable* like ‘is coloured’ or ‘has a shape’

¹¹Cited by Van Cleve in Van Cleve 1994 p583.

¹² I owe this suggestion to (name withheld)

only it is the most general determinable predicate¹³. Just as to be coloured is to have any colour quality or qualities, to exist is to have any quality or qualities.

This account of existence explains why existence precedes suchness.

Together with the bare particular theory it allows for a conception of non-existent objects – including fictional entities – as bare particulars.

If non-existents are bare particulars and vice versa then, as argued in (author, article date) the bare particular theory avoids an objection – the objection that it allows for the *existence* of bare particulars and for the scenario of a particular continuing *to exist* despite losing all its qualities. The thesis that there are non-existent objects also avoids an objection. Crane (2001)) says of this thesis:

But it seems to me that such a theory is fraught with problems. How are we supposed to understand the distinction between being and existence? Specifying two domains of quantification, one a subset of the other, is not enough by itself, since what we need to understand is what distinguishes the things in the subclass (the existent) from the things in the broader class (the entities, things which have being). (Crane 2001 p339)

The reply is that the difference between existents and non-existents – the deficiency of the latter – is the insubstantiality of the non-existents: their lack of qualities.

Existents are *clothed particulars*. You and I and mountains and tables and badgers

¹³ Note that I take the determinable/determinate distinction to be a distinction between predicates rather than a distinction between (sparse) properties.

are individuals (substrata, that is) with genuine suchnesses. We exist. Holmes and Hogwarts – bare objects of thought - lack genuine suchnesses and fail to exist.¹⁴

The thesis that there are things that don't exist and the bare particular theory are both controversial theses. They are difficult to swallow but with the right account of existence they can be swallowed together. The bare particular theory can explain what's wrong with non-existent objects: why they don't manifest themselves in the world in the manner of existing things. And bare particulars – which the bare particular theory, controversially, seems to allow for - can be passed off as non-existent.

*

The account of fictional entities I want to defend takes Miss Jean Brodie and Obadiah Slope to be *non-existent objects*. I acknowledge the need to explain the dubiously coherent notion of 'non-existent object' and I have tried to meet that need by outlining an account of existence and non-existence. I will now address an argument to the conclusion that Obadiah Slope *exists*. According to creationists about fictional entities 'Obadiah Slope was created by Anthony Trollope' is 'intuitively true'. But if something was created (and hasn't since ceased to exist) then it exists. Therefore Slope exists.

'Obadiah Slope was created by Anthony Trollope' is not like 'Pegasus is a horse'. Its intuitiveness survives reflection in a way that the intuitiveness of

¹⁴ If Ontic Structural Realism (See Ladyman and Ross 2007) is correct the same can be said about basic physical particles. The account of existence and non-existence that I am advocating here allows

'Pegasus is a horse' doesn't. Reflection doesn't reveal - at least not straight away, prior to any sophisticated theorising - an obviously *better* explanation of why it's acceptable to say 'Slope was created by Trollope,' than the explanation that this sentence is literally true.

But there are other claims that also survive reflection that - while in keeping with the idea that authors create *characters* in *some* sense of 'character' - don't sit comfortably with creationism about *fictional entities*. Characters, for instance, are said to be 'well developed' or 'not well developed'. Creationists however will not allow - any more than Meinongians and bare particularists - that a fictional entity can be *developed* to a lesser or greater degree. These things aren't built up out of parts.¹⁵

What *can* be more or less well developed is a *characterisation*. If a characterisation is thought of as a proposition or a *set* of propositions this is not true. But a characterisation can also be thought of as something that is *put together* by an author. Consider the properties *has red hair, is a sycophant, is called 'Obadiah'...* bound to each other by a relation whose obtaining depends on it being imagined that an entity instantiates the properties. The structure comprising of these properties *bound by this relation* would not exist were it not for the author's imaginative efforts, and so can properly be counted as the author's creation and, depending on the richness of number and variety of properties that comprise the structure, as more or less well developed.

structuralists to speak of basic particles and thus to be able to distinguish between instantiated and uninstantiated structures, while maintaining as they wish to that only structures *exist*.

This is the sort of thing that we take authors to have created, I suggest: characterisations like the characterisation of Slope. Not things like Slope himself, the non-existent individual that is imagined to possess the characterising properties. There are ‘intuitive’ locutions that are not consistent with this suggestion. But no theory that anyone would want to hold can accommodate all our ‘intuitive’ locutions about the creation of ‘fictional characters’. As Takashi Yagisawa (Yagisawa 2001 p165) points out, locutions like ‘Dickens created Mrs. Gamp as a fat old woman who is fond of gin’ entail that Dickens was a real-life Victor Frankenstein, the creator not just of an abstract artefact but of a woman. Yagisawa is correct to insist that we can’t take this talk at face value. Kendall Walton’s suggestion that this kind of talk is part of an ‘unofficial’ pretence - usefully engaged in by critics for their hermeneutic purposes - that authors create people to inhabit their fictional worlds (Walton 1990 pp410-411) is a sensible account of much talk of creation. But insofar as you have a strong intuition that authors *really* create *something*, I suggest your intuition is the intuition that they create characterisations and not fictional entities.

To press home the point, I will ask you to imagine a case of creative failure: an author tries to come up with an original characterisation but ends up largely replicating an existent characterisation. For Thomasson, so long as the author didn’t intend to merely ‘import’ someone else’s fictional character her endeavours have succeeded: she has created a new character. Our judgement of creative failure is not accounted for on Thomasson’s view; but it is on the view that I am suggesting. We

¹⁵ Cf Thomasson 1999 pp12-13. Thomasson’s account has it that fictional entities can be spontaneously

don't count the unoriginal author's characterisation as her own creation, no more than we count the replacement of a few bricks in an existing edifice as the creation of a new building.

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It is easier to explain away the intuition that Slope was created than to explain away the intuition that Slope *doesn't exist*¹⁶. I won't however invoke the 'intuitive' obviousness of 'Slope doesn't exist' as decisive against creationism. Why should it be? Our intuitions about fictional entities derive from our naïve pre-theoretical conception of these things. Ultimately I am prepared to concede, as creationists should also be prepared to concede, that this conception may be confused or mistaken. The purpose of giving an account of fictional entities is *not* to accommodate all the intuitive claims about fictional entities, even all those that survive reflection. No theory *can* accommodate all these claims. The task is to replace our 'intuitive' pre-theoretical conception with a theory. In section 6, in the course of explaining and defended my theory - bare particularism - I will return to the comparative merits of this theory and creationism.

6. Bare Particularism: what it says and doesn't say

created by linguistic acts.

¹⁶ See Everett 2013 pp148-163 for a discussion of attempts to explain away this intuition.

The account of fictional entities I am advocating takes the fictional entity Pegasus - the object of my thoughts about Pegasus - to be a bare particular. It holds that Pegasus doesn't exist: that there is no such real thing. Indeed if the words 'thing' and 'entity' can be understood to mean 'substantial item belonging to some characterisable kind' then it can be said that *there is no such thing - no such entity - as Pegasus*. Think of Pegasus as the focal point of Pegasus-thoughts. There is such a focal point but there isn't some substantial thing - some creature or entity of any *sort* - that we think about when we think about Pegasus. Pegasus the fictional horse is nothing more than *the focus of Pegasus-thoughts*: it is a bare object of thought.

Let me elaborate this account, making clear what it says and what it omits to say. I will also make comparisons with extant accounts, particularly creationism and modal Meinongianism. What I want to emphasise - more than the original features of the account - is what it shares with these accounts, and how it may be regarded as the logical end-point of lines of thought implicit in recent work on fictional entities.

First, what does the account say about the 'intuitive truths' about fictional entities? It denies the literal truth of alleged intuitive truths like 'Holmes is a detective' and 'Pegasus is a horse'. As argued above, this is the appropriate stance towards these claims. It affirms the truth of 'Pegasus is a fictional horse'. This is a truth about the fiction and its relation to Pegasus.

What are the other genuine intuitive truths about fictional characters? That Pegasus doesn't exist, that Holmes is famous, that Santa Claus is widely believed to be real, that Pippi Longstocking is loved by generations of children, that Holmes

doesn't really live in Baker Street, that Ron Weasley, according to the fiction, is a less competent wizard than Hermione Granger.... These are all either negative truths that deny existence or qualities to fictional entities, or truths about the relations these items stand in: relations that relate fictional entities to works of fiction, authors and readers, but whose obtaining does not depend on the possession of qualities by the fictional entities themselves. Bare particularism accommodates these intuitive truths.

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It is not a requirement on an account of fictional entities that it accommodate all the intuitive claims about fictional entities; nonetheless bare particularism does a good job. There is another alleged requirement that I will call into question. This is the alleged requirement to provide a 'criterion of identity' for fictional entities. A criterion of identity for an object A can be understood as a condition – that doesn't mention identity or distinctness - that an object meets just if it is identical to A. Parsons' neo-Meinongian theory gives the following criterion: an object is identical to A just if it has all and only the nuclear properties that A has (Parsons 1980 p28).

This criterion assumes something like the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles (PII), which Parsons' account incorporates as an axiom (Parsons 1980 p19). The bare particular theory, however, denies the necessary truth of PII. If the bare particular theory is correct then there is no reason to expect that every

object has a criterion of identity, and so bare particularism about fictional entities refuses to provide one.

It is right to refuse. Consider the sort of case that prompts concerns about the identity of fictional entities (cf Geach 1967). Imagine Hob is thinking about an imaginary witch and Nob is also thinking about an imaginary witch. Are they thinking about the same imaginary witch? There are circumstance in which we can know that the answer is yes. If Hob has told Nob that he is thinking about an imaginary witch, and Nob decides to think about that imaginary witch too, then Nob succeeds. We know Nob succeed because we know how reference works. We know that intending to refer to the individual one's interlocutor is referring to suffices to ensure the success of one's attempt to do so.

But a sufficient condition for referring to the same individual is not a criterion of identity. If this sufficient condition doesn't hold, should we expect that there is nonetheless some way of knowing whether the imaginary witches are identical? I suggest that it is obvious that there is no way of knowing. Any principle that purports to be a way of knowing, therefore, should fall under suspicion.

In the case of the imaginary witches it is clear we cannot know. What you may find more difficult to accept is that we cannot know in cases like the case of Batman and Anna Karenina. But if Batman and Anna Karenina are both bare objects of thought – if they don't have natures, familiarity with which would allow us to distinguish them - and if they are not knowably the creations of separate creators, then it is hard to see how we can be sure that they are two rather than one.

We can be sure that Batman and Anna are two rather than one only if we can rule out that the author of the original Batman comic - Bob Kane - inadvertently re-baptised the same object of thought that Tolstoy baptised as 'Anna Karenina'. Think of a case of inadvertent re-baptism of real existing entities: Hesperus is inadvertently re-baptised as 'Phosphorous'. The baptiser in each of the first and second baptisms picks out an object to be baptised - by description or by ostension – and it happens that the two baptisers pick out the same object. The baptism of a fictional entity, if bare particularism is correct, cannot require that the baptiser single out the object to be baptised via a uniquely identifying description, or that there is a causal relation that obtains only between the baptiser and the object to be baptised. Baptism must be achieved through something like what Graham Priest calls an 'act of pure intention' (Priest 2005, p142): a 'mental act of pointing' to an object of thought. What is to guarantee that Tolstoy's mental act of pointing and Kane's mental act of pointing didn't point to the same object of thought?

Tolstoy, I am supposing, intended to imagine a *fictional* entity. He intended to imagine of an unreal entity that it was an adulteress called 'Anna Karenina'. This intention, I am supposing, was sufficient to ensure he didn't inadvertently re-baptise an *existing* entity. Authors often, of course, model fictional entities on real people of their acquaintance; but in these cases particularly the author intends that the imaginary person is not just the real person the fictional character is represented as resembling.

Perhaps an intention to imagine a fictional entity *other than Anna Karenina* is sufficient to ensure that one does so. If this is the case and if Kane had such an

intention then Batman is not Anna Karenina. But I doubt that Kane had such an intention. It is more plausible, perhaps, that such an intention prevented Batman being re-baptised as ‘The Joker’. It is not implausible that typically an author, in the course of writing a story, having imagined a fictional entity, then intends to imagine *another* fictional entity with certain imaginary relationships to the first.

But the important point – the point I want to emphasise - is that it doesn’t matter. It is not a problem for realism about fictional and imaginary entities if we cannot in many cases know whether a given fictional entity is one and the same as another. There are cases in which we wish to talk about the same fictional entity and can clearly do so. In other cases, the strict and literal truth of answers to identity questions doesn’t matter. In making cross-fictional comparisons between Batman and Anna Karenina, for example, we engage in a new fiction according to which Batman and Anna Karenina are two people from the same world. That is what is *fictionally* true. No significant issue hinges on the real truth. Issues of originality and influence hinge on authors’ intentions and similarities of characterisation. Even when opinions on these issues are expressed as identity statements the real truth of these identity statements is beside the point being made.¹⁷

No question of literary criticism hinges on the *literal* truth of locutions like ‘Seaman Bodine from *Gravity’s Rainbow* is Pig Bodine from *V*’. Nor does it matter that we cannot know for sure that ‘Batman is a fictional masked vigilante and *not* a

¹⁷ Peter Lamarque (2003) has argued that the identification of ‘fictional characters’ is interest-relative. I agree with a lot of what he says, and draw the moral that strict identity of intentional objects is not the issue in such ‘identifications.’

fictional adulteress' is literally true. The point these words would typically be used to make – a point whose knowable truth I am not questioning - is a point about how Batman is represented in the Batman comics and movies. Batman in these works is represented as a masked vigilante and not as an adulteress. The possibility that the bare object of thought imagined by Bob Kane as a masked vigilante may be the same bare object of thought that Tolstoy imagined as an adulteress may prevent our knowing for sure that Batman is not a fictional adulteress, but it is not relevant to this point.

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Bare particularism's principled denial that fictional entities have non-question begging identity conditions cuts a Gordian knot. Other theories of fictional entities propose identity conditions that are defective or uninformative.

Graham Priest proposes the following criterion of identity for non-existent objects: A and B are identical iff they have the same properties in the same 'closed'¹⁸ worlds (Priest 2005, p89). This criterion is supposed to allow us to decide whether, for instance, Holmes and Pegasus are two or one (Priest 2005, p89). Priest suggests that there are closed worlds in which Holmes is a detective but Pegasus isn't, and so Holmes and Pegasus are two.

But Priest is not entitled to conclude that Holmes and Pegasus are two.... Priest allows for a restriction on the properties that individuals possess in other

worlds: if in the actual world when I think of an object A I am thereby thinking of an object B, then if A has a quality in a given closed world then so does B (Priest 2005, p89). Think of Clark Kent and Superman. Priest doesn't want his criterion to deliver the result that Clark Kent isn't Superman. In the actual world a Superman-thought is a Clark Kent-thought; the restriction thus requires that in any world in which Clark wins the Pulitzer prize, so does Superman.

But what if it's also true that in the actual world a Holmes-thought is a Pegasus-thought? Then the restriction prevents Holmes and Pegasus from differing in any closed world and Priest's criterion delivers the verdict that Holmes and Pegasus are one. Priest's criterion tells us that Holmes and Pegasus are two only if it can be ruled out that actually a Holmes-thought is a Pegasus-thought. I have suggested that this can't be ruled out, and Priest is in no position to suggest otherwise. It is Priest who suggests that fictional entities are baptised by primitive 'mental acts of pointing' and not by description, permitting inadvertent re-baptism.

If it can't be ruled out that a Holmes-thought is a Pegasus-thought then Priest's criterion is of no help in determining if Holmes and Pegasus are two or one.¹⁹ Even if it could be ruled out that my Holmes-thought is a Pegasus-thought though, it would be ruled out by examining the intentions of the baptisers of Holmes and Pegasus, and crucially whether Conan Doyle intended to imagine something other than Pegasus. The fact that Conan Doyle intended to imagine an imaginary

¹⁸ Closed under entailment. Priest's semantics also posits 'open worlds' in which anything goes. There is an open world in which George Orwell is not Eric Blair.

¹⁹ In (Priest 2008) Priest acknowledges that in some cases there is no way by the principles of Priest 2005 to determine whether fictional entities A and B are two or one – though he doesn't recognise that the case of Holmes and Pegasus, or the case of Batman and Anna Karenina may be such a case. Priest in this paper suggests (without endorsing) an 'anti-realist' alternative to the theory of Priest 2005

detective is not enough. An imaginary horse (an item that in some other possible or impossible world is a horse, as Priest would put it) can be reimagined as a detective (can be a detective in another possible or impossible world).

Modal Meinongianism cannot provide identity conditions that allow that it is knowable that Batman isn't Anna Karenina. Meinongianism can. But Meinongianism's identity conditions are unintuitive in many cases (cf Thomasson 1999 pp56-62) and the assumption they rely on – CP – is incoherent. Creationism's identity conditions are incomplete. Thomasson suggests a necessary condition (Thomasson 1999 p67) for the identity of fictional entities that feature in different fictions but it is not explained how this condition results from the nature of the process of creation. It doesn't result from anything about the intrinsic nature of fictional entities, as conceived by creationists. Creationism, like bare particularism, has nothing to say about the intrinsic nature of fictional entities.

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Although I am happy for you to think of bare particularism as an original view, I want to stress its continuity with what is best in what has already been said about fictional entities. The bare particular theory and the account of existence as the possession of genuine suchness provide a theoretical framework for the insight that fictional entities lack what I have called genuine suchnesses. This insight is implicit in or at least compatible with most of the best recent work on fictional entities. Crane's view, modal Meinongianism, and creationism - minus the

contention that fictional entities exist (which if the theory of existence of section 5 is correct entails that fictional entities have suchness) – are compatible with this insight. The emphasis of Priest and Berto's exposition is on the attempt to somehow preserve CP and acknowledge the truth 'in some sense' (Priest & Berto 2014. p188) of characterisations like 'Pegasus is a horse'. But they deny that the sense in which this characterisation is true is a *literal* sense (Priest & Berto 2014. p188). They deny that fictional entities actually have any 'existence entailing' qualities. If modal Meinongians are realists about the other worlds they posit, then we part company (and if you balk at existing impossible worlds you should join me). But if modal Meinongianism's other worlds are ersatz worlds²⁰, and if modal Meinongianism will allow that all suchnesses are existence entailing, then modal Meinongianism is misnamed and is very nearly the position that I have been arguing for.

That is, the modal Meinongianism of Priest 2005, with ersatz worlds, is close to bare particularism. Priest in his (2008) suggests - without endorsing - an 'anti-realist' alternative to the 'realist' view of Priest 2005. This view follows creationism in supposing that what 'exotic' objects there are depends on people's intentional states. (It differs from creationism in denying the *existence* of exotic objects.)²¹ Bare particularism is a realist position. It doesn't restrict the number of non-existent

²⁰ . I am happy to acknowledge that there are ersatz worlds that represent situations involving Pegasus, Hermione Granger and Batman. Some of these situations are possible and some aren't. Which are possible? The bare particular theory allows for (but does not insist on) radical anti-essentialism. The Bare Particular Theory puts no constraint on what a particular can be. Because there is nothing that a particular essentially is, there's nothing that it cannot be. I am inclined then to say that Holmes is a possible detective but also a possible fried egg. And Anna Karenina is also a possible detective, as is Pegasus and Hogwarts. There is no non-contradictory way that a particular cannot be, that is. A particular cannot be square and non-square. So an impossible situation involving Holmes is a situation in which Holmes is square and non-square.

²¹ Nonetheless Priest suggests there may be a sense of 'created' according to which fictional objects on the anti-realist view are created.

objects to those dependent (in some unexplained way) on actual intentional states. I reject this restriction because I don't understand the nature of the supposed dependence, and because the realm of non-existent objects doesn't just include fictional entities – entities mentioned by fictions, whose number is limited at the upper limit by the number of fictions – it includes possible existents, past and future existents (if certain views about time are correct) and *possible fictional entities*.

Bare particularism's accommodation of other examples of exotic objects (possibilia (cf Williamson 2013), past and future existents (cf author, article date)) is an advantage over creationism and anti-realist modal Meinongianism, I contend. I find it difficult to understand the dependence relation posited by these views. But if I could I would say something stronger. These views neither eliminate fictional entities by reducing them to mental phenomena nor fully vindicate them by deeming them independent of these phenomena. An argument against this (shabby, I would urge) compromise is beyond the scope of this paper though.

I have no knock down argument against creationism and anti-realist modal Meinongianism. Intuitions are not a compelling argument if they stem merely from a naïve conception of fictional entities that may be false or confused. Intuitions of conceptual truths are another matter. I would contend that the account of existence of section 6 is a conceptual truth. So creationists need to either attribute suchnesses to fictional entities or to deny, as Priest's anti-realist modal Meinongianism denies, that their 'created' dependent fictional entities exist. Just to make clear, I haven't maintained that it is a conceptual truth that Batman lacks any suchness. My denial

of any suchness to Batman is an assumption that follows from the assumption that Batman doesn't exist.

7. Conclusion

Bare particularism, I would urge, bears comparison with the other views I have considered, and insofar as it is coherent it is an improvement on some. You may find talk of bare particulars mysterious; I find the bare particular theory a pleasingly simple theory of individuality and individuals, both existent and non-existent. You may have a problem with unknowable facts; I have a problem with knowledge claims that are based on unexplained or easily explained-away 'intuitions' or the authority of 'standard judgements'. It is important, as I have repeatedly stressed, to be clear about the purpose of developing an account of fictional entities. Bare particularism provides an object of thought for every thought about a fictional entity, and a referent for every meaningful utterance of a fictional name. It is supported by a theoretical framework that has a wider applicability. It says nothing that is demonstrably wrong about fictional entities.

Bare particularism, I would urge, is the best option for realists about fictional entities. At any rate it is an option. Realists can follow Meinong in maintaining that the totality of what there is is not exhausted by the existents. But the other key insight towards understanding non-existents and non-existence, if I am right, is gained by turning Meinongianism on its head. Suchness does not precede existence;

existence precedes suchness. Fictional entities are both more and less than they might be supposed to be.

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