# 6
# Do the imaginings that fictions invite have a direction of fit?

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## 6.1 Introduction: direction of fit and fiction-making imaginative requirements

Anscombe (1957, 56) introduced the intuitive asymmetry in direction of fit (DoF) with a famous example. She describes a man going shopping with a list while being tailed by a private detective listing the man's purchases; what distinguishes the shopping list from the detective's list? "It is precisely this: if the list and the things that the man actually buys do not agree, and if this and this alone constitutes a *mistake*, then the mistake is not in the list but in the man's performance [. . . ] whereas if the detective's record and what the man actually buys do not agree, then the mistake is in the record" (my emphasis, which I'll explain below). Following Humberstone (1992), I'll talk of the *thetic* DoF (in speech: tellings, guesses, presuppositions; in attitudes: judgements, perceptions, beliefs) vs. the *telic* DoF (in speech: commands, requests, proposals, questions; in attitudes: desires, intentions). In her work on fiction and imagination, Kathleen Stock has argued for a view that I have always found intriguing—and *prima facie* plausible—without clearly understanding it. I would put it thus: F-imaginings have the *thetic* DoF of beliefs and assertions, as opposed to the *telic* DoF of desires and requests. In this chapter I'll argue that the normative view of fictionality I have defended elsewhere allows us to present Stock's suggestions in a perspicuous way.

Walton's work on fiction and the imagination has been deservedly influential on philosophical and empirical work. As commentators have pointed out (Friend 2008, 152–154; Woodward 2014, 825), Walton himself was indifferent to his account's potential as conceptual analysis. On his view, whether or not this fits folk pretheoretical notions, fictions are artefacts with a socially ascribed function, from which specific prescriptions to imagine result; this determines the fictional content of the work, what is fictional according to it: "a proposition is fictional in (the world of) a particular work, *W* . . . just in case full appreciation of *W* requires imagining it" (Walton 2015, 17).

In spite of Walton's scepticism about analyses, writers influenced by him take their work in that spirit. Currie (1990) argues that fictions result from a *sui generis*

Manuel García-Carpintero, *Do the imaginings that fictions invite have a direction of fit?* In: *The Language of Fiction*. Edited by: Emar Maier and Andreas Stokke, Oxford University Press. 
DOI: 10.1093/oso/ 9780198846376.003.0006

speech act, fiction-making, satisfactorily addressing in my view Walton's (1990, 85–89) concerns.[1] Following Currie, I have also suggested in previous work that we should take fiction-making to be a specific sort of invitation to imagine, addressed to a specific kind of audience (García-Carpintero 2007, 2013, 2016, 2019a, 2019b). Like Currie, I thus disagree with Walton that literary acts of fiction-making are just (as Green 2017a, 54 aptly puts it) "acts of speech"—say, acts of pretending to do something, bereft of the representational aims of speech acts, as Searle (1974/5) has it—as opposed to speech acts proper, with specific force and contents.[2]

I'll briefly revisit the most significant disagreements about the fiction-making act.[3] From the earlier stages of speech act theory, there has been a divide between descriptive, psychological theories (favoured by Grice, Strawson, Schiffer, and their followers) and prescriptive or normative theories (preferred by Austin, Alston, Searle, and their followers). The former take psychological attitudes to be constitutive of speech acts. On a Gricean view, it is constitutive of an assertion that *p* that the speaker intends the hearer to believe *p*, or to believe that the speaker believes *p*, on the basis of the recognition of that intention. Fiction-making is analogously characterized by the intention to lead the audience to imagine its content by the recognition of that intention. Stock (2017) offers a version of that account and addresses serious problems raised over the years by Friend (2008, 2012) and others, which Currie (2014), an earlier proponent, also takes up, reaching hesitant conclusions.

Griceans of course know that we evaluate assertions, criticizing them, for instance, when they are false, and that we similarly criticize fictions when they lack interest: when they fail to thrill, entertain, challenge, or move us, when they cause imaginative resistance, and so on (Stock 2017, 135). Griceans, however, take the norms thereby deployed to be *regulative*—derivable from non-illocutionary norms, perhaps moral or prudential ones. Austinian normative accounts take instead some of those norms to be *constitutive* of the relevant speech acts, on the model of games, whose natures are thought to be specifiable in terms of norms.

Unlike Currie's and Stock's, the account I have defended (García-Carpintero 2013, 2016, 2019a, 2019b) is Austinian: it encases Waltonian prescriptions in a normative speech act account. Fictions result from proposals by actual

[1] Saying that it is *sui generis* means that it is a *specific* speech act, with an individuating definition of its own, along with others such as promises, guesses, conjectures, and so on. But it also belongs in one of the highest genera for such acts in a proper taxonomy (cp. Alward 2010a, 390; 2010b, 356). 'Speech' is to be broadly understood; "speech" acts can be made with pictures: I intend my account of fiction summarized below to fully apply to films.

[2] Ohmann (1971), Grant (2001), Sutrop (2002), and Stock (2017) also support the speech act view; Gale (1971), Searle (1974/5), Alward (2009, 2010a), and Friend (2012) also object to it. García-Carpintero (2019c) provides a discussion of the issue, considering Green's view. Although Green doesn't posit a specific speech act of fiction-making, he does account for some fictions in terms of the speech act of supposing.

[3] The introductory discussion that follows overlaps with García-Carpintero (2019b).

fiction-makers for their audiences to imagine. They thereby constitutively involve prescriptions for the audience to imagine the propositions that constitute the fictional world, conditional on different features: the interests of the intended audience, their belonging to the intended class, their considering such propositions. The propositions whose imagining is prescribed in the relevant sense are specifically those such that the fiction-maker becomes by her action beholden to a norm requiring their imagining to be a worthwhile project for the relevant audience.[4]

More specifically, I took as my model Williamson's (1996) "simple" formulation for the norms of assertion, deploying a constitutive norm that uniquely characterizes the act that he calls *flat-out* assertion by its normative essence. For that act—the one we perform by default when uttering declarative sentences—Williamson advocates a *knowledge* rule, a norm requiring for correctness that the speaker knows the asserted proposition. An assertion with content *p* is the act whose result is subject to this rule: it is correct only if the speaker knows *p*. Other constatives have weaker requirements, bare truth or justification for *guessing* or *conjecturing*, etc. Norms like this are *sui generis*: they do not have their sources in moral or prudential rules, but in specifically illocutionary codes. They are defeasible and *pro tanto*: they can be overridden by stronger norms. It is possible to violate them, thereby rendering the acts not non-existent (Austinian *misfires*), but wrong (Austinian *abuses*). Thus, there are plenty of situations in which *p* is asserted but the speaker doesn't know *p* because *p* is false or lacks justification. The assertion is then wrong, relative to a norm constitutive of that act.

In order to apply this to *fiction-making*, my proposal is modelled on a normative account of directives derived from Alston (2000). Directives are subject to the norm that they are correct only if their audiences are provided with *a reason* to see to it that their content obtains. The reason is based on different sources, which further specify the nature of the directive: the authority of the speaker in what I take to be the *flat-out*, default case of commands,[5] or the good will or presumed interests of the audience in the case of requests, suggestions, or proposals. Again, the norm is *sui generis*, defeasible, and *pro tanto*, and it is possible for it to be broken—as when a speaker invites the audience to do something that has no chance of satisfying their relevant desires. My proposal was that a fiction with the content *p* is a result of an act that is correct only if it gives relevant audiences (audiences of the intended kind, with the disposition to engage with such works) a

[4] I oscillate between deontic and axiological vocabulary throughout. For our purposes, it doesn't matter which one takes precedence.

[5] "The commander characteristically intends his hearer to take the commander's will instead of his own as a guide to action" (Hart 1982, 253). See also Raz (1975) and Roth (2004). Sciaraffa (2009) draws on a Gricean view of speech acts to elaborate on Hart's suggestions, along the lines that Hart himself had advanced; Enoch (2011, 15–17) provides a normative elaboration, very close to the account I assume, without relating it to speech acts.

reason to imagine *p*. The reasons in question have to do with whatever makes engaging with good fictions worthwhile: to experience the emotions provoked by engagement with well-drafted, suspenseful thrillers, or to put oneself in the shoes of other people in other circumstances, thereby obtaining knowledge about them.

A reason I have offered for that view was that normative accounts fare better than its rivals on the intentionalism/conventionalism debate about the interpretation of fictions. There are compelling criticisms of Gricean accounts of core speech acts such as assertion, based on cases showing that, even when lacking the relevant Gricean communicative intentions, speakers nonetheless make them and are obligated by their norms. Similarly, I have argued with detailed examples (García-Carpintero 2013, 2019a) that a fiction might determinately have a specific interpretation, even if the author has not intended it to be imagined in its detailed specificity. Another reason I have provided (García-Carpintero 2016, 2019a, 2019c) is that the normative account provides a better understanding of the relation between fiction and truth, answering the criticisms by Friend (2008, 2012) already mentioned, and providing a better alternative to her Waltonian institutionalist, anti-essentialist *genre* account.[6]

I will first explain (Section 6.2) how the normative view of fiction-making cashes out the intuitively and theoretically significant metaphor of the *fictional world*. Then I'll move on to the main goal of this chapter. After outlining philosophical debates on DoF and sketching a proposal of my own (Section 6.3), I'll use the account of fictional worlds in Section 6.2 to offer an elaboration and defence of Stock's view on the DoF of the imaginings prescribed by fictions (Section 6.4). Section 6.5 concludes.

## 6.2 Fictional worlds

The key for my account of the DoF for fictional imagining in Section 6.3 lies in the role I give to the useful metaphor of *the world of the fiction*, which Walton (2015, 17) employs in summarizing his view in a quotation given above: "a proposition is fictional in (the world of) a particular work, *W* . . . just in case full appreciation of

[6] The normative account naturally accommodates the points Currie (2014) makes in response to Friend's criticisms. The account supports a more holistic approach than Currie's on what fictional *utterances* are. On account of aspects like "author's asides", such utterances don't need to include the whole text; but I take them to be full discourses, not utterances of sentences between full stops (García-Carpintero 2020). Aside from that, I am happy with the strong supervenience account of the fictionality of works on fiction-making acts (and, to that extent, on fiction-makers' intentions) that Currie advances. The normative account also endorses the additional principles that Currie (2014, 357) suggests and his appeal to higher-order considerations (2014, 358), as in fact some of the points I make below illustrate. Finally, the constrained role that the intentions of the fiction-maker play in a normative account (García-Carpintero 2019a) deals well with some of Currie's reasons for pessimism (2014, 359). I'll have nothing to add about the important role that non-propositional imaginings play in establishing fictionality—a point on which again I agree with Currie.

*W* requires imagining it". The metaphor is put to serious theoretical uses. Psychologists use it to explain "transportation" or "immersion" in a narrative—the experience of "suspending disbelief" so as to become concerned with fictional scenarios as if they were part of the actual world (cf. Friend 2017, 31; forthcoming, ch. 4; Kampa 2018). I'll show in this section how the proprietary notions of a normative view help us to cash out this metaphor.[7]

Stock (2017, 20) stipulates *F-imagining* to be "whatever kind of imagining is appropriate, at a minimum, as a response to fictional content". This is, I take it, a well-motivated technical notion given all accounts of fiction-making we are considering, which in one way or another understand fictions as representational devices constitutively inviting imaginative responses. The nature of F-imaginings is to be further specified by the theoretical role they play in the specific theoretical proposals positing them.

I also agree with Stock that F-imaginings have propositional contents (2017, 20–27). I think we should adopt as minimalist as possible an attitude towards propositions; I have espoused in previous work a view originating with Stalnaker, namely that they are just properties of *circumstances of evaluation* (cf. García-Carpintero forthcoming; Richard 2013). What are such circumstances? For Stalnaker they are complete and consistent possible worlds; for Lewisians, *centred* possible worlds. For reasons presented below, I need to take them to be more fine-grained, in the tradition of Situation Semantics updated in the "truthmaker semantics" of Yablo (2014) and Fine (2017). Stock might concur with this, for she prefers to take F-imaginings to be about "scenarios" rather than complete and consistent fictional worlds (2017, 27), on account, I think, of worries related to my own. I will nevertheless continue to speak about the *fictional world*, because this is more usual than *fictional scenario*, and I need to underwrite the intuitive character of this notion. I fully agree with her in addition that not only can such a "world" not be identified with a complete and consistent possible world, but neither can it be reductively analysed in such terms.[8]

Formal semantics offers tools to better understand the notion of a fictional world. Truthmaker semantics develops the Austinian idea that truth (the standard of correctness for assertoric speech acts) concerns not the full actual world, but finer-grained situations made of objects, events, and properties that the representational acts are about (Kratzer 2017). Berto (2017a) invokes work in that tradition

[7] Cf. Terrone's (2020) notion of a "spatiotemporal framework", which plays an important role in a proposal to distinguish documentaries from docudramas I find congenial.

[8] In the way it is deployed here, the world-metaphor is untouched by Lorand's (2001) and Sainsbury's (2014) scepticism, addressed to views like Lewis's (1978) that attempt to reductively analyse it in possible worlds ideology. I will use *the story plot* as an equally adequate alternative. I am unconcerned with the circularity that Lewis (1978, 265) sees in it, for it is grounded on his striving for a possible worlds-based reduction of fictional content (Sainsbury 2014, 283).

to articulate in a sufficiently precise sense the idea of a fictional world that F-imaginings are in a similar sense about.[9]

Berto's account assumes some "explicit input", as in supposition-based reasoning, and offers a theoretical account of an acceptable *logic of the imagination* that leads us beyond that explicit input "while stick[ing] with what the explicit input is *about*" (Berto 2017a, §3), offering inferential patterns that he takes to be valid. This assumes a version of the standard distinction between *direct*, or *primary* fictional truths, and *indirect* or *implied* ones, as in Lewis's (1978) or Walton's (1990) work.[10] In Lewis's view we get the primary content on the assumption that the fictional narrator tells the fiction "as known fact", and we derive implied truths from either a "Reality Principle" or a "Mutual Belief Principle". This is the core of what Matravers (1997, 79) calls "the report model": "in reading a novel, a reader makes-believe he is being given a report of actual events. In other words, he makes-believe the content of the novel is being reported to him as known fact by a narrator". This assumes something controversial that I nonetheless grant, which will play a crucial role in my proposal to account for the DoF of F-imaginings; to wit, that verbal fictions have fictional narrators, explicit or implicit.[11] As Alward (2009) neatly puts it, actual storytellers of verbal fictions "portray" them in the way actors play characters (cf. also Ohmann 1971, 18; Gale 1971, 337). In creating *Don Quixote*, Cervantes "plays" the first-personal narrator, who presents himself as editing the translation into Spanish he has had made of an Arabic historical narrative by a Cide Hamete Benengeli, completing the first eight chapters he had previously obtained from archival sources.

Now, Walton was sceptical that, when it comes to F-imaginings, there are any such principles that are sufficiently general to be codified (1990, 139). Stock (2017, 64, 180) shows that fiction-making intentions can trump even the most solid inference principles used to derive fictional content. Thus, she would accept the default validity of Berto's (2017a, §4) *adjunction* rule, for it corresponds to her principle that "fiction is normally conjunctive" (2017, 27): when both $p$ and $q$ are fictional in a given fiction, they "co-occur with respect to the same scenario" (2017, 27). However, she shows that even this rule has exceptions, in cases of fictions presenting a plurality of worlds (2017, 169–174); this will be illustrated below.

[9] The proposal is made precise by resorting to traditional possible worlds semantics; Berto (2017b) develops it in a way that deals with inconsistent F-imaginings that I, like him and Stock (2017, 141–144), take to be possible. In any case, *illuminating a view by making it precise* doesn't amount to *providing a conceptual reduction*.

[10] As Lorand (2001, 427) puts it, "the main function of the 'world' metaphor in theories of fiction is to supply a framework for justifying the tendency to go beyond the given text and include in the story more than that which is explicitly stated". Williamson (2016) argues that this projection beyond the explicit is anchored on beliefs or knowledge about the workings of the actual world, and speculates on this basis about an evolutionary origin for the imagination.

[11] My reasons are stated below, at the end of Section 6.4.

Nonetheless, this is not a reason to be sceptical about the distinction between *direct* and *indirect* fictional content, only to conclude that all such inference principles, including the more purely logical ones that Berto studies, are defeasible. The distinction is intuitively plausible, and, as I have argued elsewhere (García-Carpintero 2019c), it can be theoretically grounded: the explicit contents of a given fiction are, roughly, those features of the fictional world fixed by what the author primarily, immediately pretends to do, or has other actors pretending to do. In putting forward a declarative sentence, the author primarily, immediately "plays" the fictional narrator asserting what is said by it.[12] Implicatures that may add to the character of the fictional world (those generated by the fictional narrator, like the ironical content of the first line of *Pride and Prejudice*, and those by the actual fiction-maker), like the outputs of inferences based on the aforementioned principles, are not immediate.

A notion of *the fictional world* also plays an important role in "semantic" alternatives to "pragmatic" accounts of fictional utterances like the one I hold. I didn't mention them in the previous section because, to the extent that they constitute a real alternative, I have serious doubts about them. Thus, Predelli (1997), Recanati (2000, 213–226), Reimer (2005), and Voltolini (2006) have advanced semantic contextualist views of fictional discourse. In a narrative in the historical present, the context in which "The battle unfolded now" is uttered requires us to evaluate the assertion not with respect to the time when the utterance is made, but rather with respect to another, contextually provided time. On these views, the context of fictional utterances similarly leads us to evaluate their truth not at the actual world, but at an imaginary one, the world of the fiction.[13] But these proposals are either committed to fictional objects as referents for fictional terms, or make claims that I don't think we should accept;[14] so I go along with Walton (1990, 41–42) that "truth in fiction" is not a form of truth.[15]

Let me sum up what I have been arguing so far: there is an intuitive metaphorical notion of *the world that a fiction is about*, which is deployed for significant theoretical purposes in accounting for fiction. It serves to capture the measure of

[12] Cf. García-Carpintero (2019c). It is in this sense that Searle (1974–5) is right that fiction-making is pretence. Cases of unreliable narrators don't require any special qualification.

[13] Predelli and Reimer formulate their views in a possible worlds semantics; this can be understood not as a reductive proposal, but as done merely for the sake of offering a precise model. Voltolini takes the notion as primitive in his earlier work, but he provides a cognitive elaboration in more recent presentation (Voltolini 2016). Woods (2018) also takes a similar view; see García-Carpintero (2018).

[14] Reimer (2005) disclaims the ontological consequences of the view by ascribing to fictional utterances truth-conditions but not propositional contents. My deflationary take on propositions leaves me no room for that distinction.

[15] Everett (2013, 48) suggests that the difference between these "semantic" accounts and "pragmatic" ones is not great. I have been scare-quoting "semantic" and "pragmatic" because the indication that a declarative is used for fiction-making and not for asserting is by my lights as "semantic" as the indication that it is used for guessing or supposing.

objectivity that fictional content has, in particular when it comes to nonexplicit content, allowing for error and ignorance in fiction consumers, and even on the side of fiction-makers themselves. It is also useful to explain fictional immersion, and it has received elucidation in formal semantics.

On my view we should cash out this helpful metaphor in terms of the world-constituting prescriptions to imagine that are assumed in the normative speech act account. Fictions result from the specific norms to which fiction-makers commit themselves, appraising the particular proposals to imagine they issue in creating them. The *fictional world* (the *story plot*) consists of the contents on whose imagining by the intended audience a proper appraisal of the fiction-maker's proposal is to be grounded; the scenario whose imaginative representation the fiction-maker commits to be worthwhile for the relevant audience. The fictional world in which the plot of the story takes place consists of the prescribed fictional truths.[16]

Fictional worlds are indeterminate, as shown by Beardsley-like silly questions such as how many children Lady Macbeth had—which, following Lorand (2001, 428), I distinguish from Walton-like silly questions. It is not that they include indeterminate objects, which, putting aside weird postmodernist fictions, they don't (Berto 2017a, §5); it is just that the grounding facts leave the issue undecided.[17] It is not fictional in the world of *Macbeth* that Lady Macbeth has exactly one child, and it isn't fictional either that she has at least two; *Macbeth* leaves the question undecided.

Williams and Woodward (2019) point out an interesting ambiguity. For this indeterminacy can be taken (as they put it) in either a "permissivist" or rather a "prohibitionist" way. On the latter reading, one *ought not* imagine it one way, and one ought not imagine it the other. On the former, one is allowed both. Given that, on the present view, the prescriptions that determine the fictional world are those required for competent appreciation of the work, i.e. for proper appraisal of the speech act from which it results, I submit that the prohibitionist line is the best take on the indeterminacy that Beardsley-like silly questions exhibit: whatever one does is for such purposes irrelevant, and therefore fails to characterize the fictional scenario. When it comes to imaginatively construing it, the reader ought not to

[16] "In inviting the reader to constitute speech acts to go with its sentences, the literary work is asking him to participate in the imaginative construction of a world—or at least as much of one as is necessary to give the speech acts an adequate setting" (Ohmann 1971, 17). By invoking the normative account, García-Carpintero (2019b) distinguishes prescribed imaginings that are constitutive of the fictional world from those that are merely ancillary to its determination, and in that way addresses Walton's (2015) recent scepticism that his earlier account really offers a sufficient condition for fictionality. Chasid (2020) makes a similar distinction, and uses it to similarly address the concern.

[17] Nevertheless, assuming a fictionalist stance towards theoretical posits such as propositions and fictional worlds, it does no harm to take such products of representational activities to be indeterminate "objects".

imagine that Lady Macbeth has exactly one child, and ought not to imagine that she has at least two (granted that it is to be imagined that she has some).[18]

I disagree with Williams and Woodward's view that prohibitionism is adequate for cases of "deliberate ambiguity" creating interpretative plurality. *The Turn of the Screw* is a much-discussed example; whether Deckard is a replicant in the world of *Blade Runner*, or whether Tony Soprano is killed when the screen goes black at the end of *The Sopranos*, are other good cases. On my view, the best account here is permissivist. I take this to follow from the view that the work determines *two different worlds*, only partially overlapping, and that full appreciation requires imagining at least one, and, if one imagines also the other, to avoid conjoining them.[19] This is also Stock's view (2017, 105, 170).

## 6.3 Direction of fit

In this section and the next I'll argue that the normative view I defend outdoes the alternatives in allowing us to put in a perspicuous way Stock's claim (in my own terms) that F-imaginings have the DoF of judgements and assertions, not that of directives and intentions. Stock doesn't use this terminology, but she presents the contrast as relating to the distinction usually made in terms of DoF. I'll start by making a proposal about DoF in this section.

In previous work (2008, 371; 2011, 146–147), Stock resorted to Velleman's (2000) account, which she now finds wanting (2017, 23)—for good reasons, similar to others raised in the literature summarized below (cf. Frost 2014, 438–440). Unfortunately, the new proposal she offers doesn't help: "propositionally imagining that *p* is 'quasi-factual', by which we mean: it involves thinking that *p* . . . desiring that *p* need not involve thinking that *p*, or even being disposed to think this. In desiring that *p*, instead one may be relevantly disposed to think only that *p* is *not* the case" (2017, 22). The only notion of *thinking that* p I independently grasp is the Cartesian one, *entertaining a propositional content in some mode*, which encompasses desires and intentions (cf. Kriegel 2015, ch. 3). I understand that Stock means something else by "thinking", but I don't have any grasp of it independently of the issue at stake.

Recent discussions of these matters by Green help us, even though they also illustrate the problem we are confronted with. Green (2013, 390) characterizes the *assertive family* as "that class of actions in which a speaker undertakes a commitment to the truth of a proposition. Examples are conjectures, assertions,

[18] In a possible worlds analysis of fictional worlds, this corresponds to Lewis's (1978, 277) "method of intersection" for dealing with inconsistent fictions. This is my official view, but I am not sanguine about it. I could instead adopt the "plurality of interpretations" line below, hence the permissivist view and the "method of union" that goes with it. Cf. García-Carpintero (2019b) for elaboration.

[19] This corresponds to Lewis's (1978, 277) "method of union".

presuppositions, presumptions and guesses. The type of commitment in question is known as word-to-world direction of fit". More recently, he mentions several features whose possession or lack thereof contribute to define that family, including *liability (to error or vindication)*, which "means that becoming committed to a proposition makes one liable to being correct or incorrect depending on how things are . . . Such a commitment is not a matter of being obliged to making that proposition true" (Green 2017b, §2). He doesn't consider F-imagining as such; but he does discuss *suppositions*, which is what he (2010) invokes to account for F-imaginings. Stock (2017, 198–207) also explains supposition in terms of propositional (F-)imaginings.

Green goes on to say (2017b, §2 fn. 3) that "a supposition for the sake of argument will not count as a member of the assertive family since one who supposes that P is not liable to being correct or incorrect depending on whether P is true". Surprisingly, this is at odds with what he had said in previous work, which was closer to Stock's take on the DoF of F-imaginings: "the class of acts containing both supposition and all members of the assertive family is characterized by the following property: one who performs any of those acts is right or wrong depending how things are" (Green 2013, fn. 6, 406). In personal communication, Green tells me that his considered view on this is the one in his more recent work, on which F-imaginings lack the thetic DoF of assertions.[20] Who is right—Stock, me, Green's earlier self, or his more recent one? I will suggest that we all are, depending on the case.

For this we need an account of DoF. Let me briefly survey some of the proposals that have been made over the years to show that they are all unfortunately wanting. Searle (1983, 7–8) says: "The idea of direction of fit is that of responsibility for fitting [ . . . ] If my beliefs turn out to be wrong it is my beliefs and not the world which is at fault, as is shown by the fact that I can correct the situation simply by changing my beliefs. It is the responsibility of the belief, so to speak, to match the world [ . . . ] But if I fail to carry out my intentions or if my desires are unfulfilled I cannot in that way correct the situation by simply changing the intention or desire. In these cases it is, so to speak, the fault of the world if it fails to match the intention or the desire" (my emphases). But where does the "responsibility" of belief/world come from? These are just metaphors (Frost 2014, 432), as the "so to speaks" concede. Even more damaging, why shouldn't we also get rid of unfit desires and intentions (Zangwill 1998, 178)?

Platts (1979, 257) says, "Beliefs aim at being true, and their being true is their fitting the world; falsity is a decisive failing in a belief, and false beliefs should be discarded; beliefs should be changed to fit with the world, not vice versa. Desires

[20] Humberstone (1992, 73) and Sutrop (2002, 340–341) also take Green's considered view. See Langland-Hassan (2015, 673–674) for other examples, and a critical discussion of such views along lines similar to mine.

aim at realization, and their realization is the world fitting with them; the fact that the indicative content of a desire is not realized in the world is not yet a failing *in the desire*, and not yet any reason to discard the desire; the world, crudely, should be changed to fit with our desires, not vice versa" (my emphasis; cp. Stalnaker 1984, 18, 80). However, the temporal locution 'yet' is misleading; taken at face value, Platts's point that the fact that their indicative content is not realized in the world is not yet a failing also applies to predictions, which nonetheless have thetic DoF. Also, why is an unfulfilled desire not equally "at fault"? Why shouldn't we get rid of it (Zangwill 1998, 178)? Why should the world be changed to fit unfit desire? (Frost 2014, 433–434)?

Smith (1994, 115) provides an account of a very different kind. Searle's and Platts's accounts are "vertical",[21] in that they involve allegedly asymmetric relations between representations and the states of affairs that are supposed to fulfil them. Smith's account is instead "horizontal", in that it is given in terms of relations among representational states in different modes: "The difference between beliefs and desires in terms of direction of fit can be seen to amount to a difference in the functional roles of belief and desire [ . . . ] a belief that *p* tends to go out of existence in the presence of a perception with the content not *p*, whereas a desire that p tends to endure, disposing the subject in that state to bring it about that *p*". Now, if a *perception* is just a seeming (which appears to be Smith's view), the proposal is wrong: some beliefs are not extinguished by contradictory appearances, as in Müller-Lyer illusions; if it is belief-involving, it begs the question and fails to explain (Humberstone 1992, 63–65).

Humberstone's (1992, 73–74) proposal is the one on which I will model mine: "unless the attitude-holder has what we might call a controlling background intention that his or her attitudinizing is successful only if its propositional content is true, then the attitude taken is not that of belief . . . *Intend* ($\neg Bp/\neg p$) . . . [for] telic attitudes, . . . the natural suggestion is . . . a certain background intention to the effect that the telic attitude, which may be a desire or may itself be an intention, should be fulfilled . . . *Intend* ($p/Wp$)". In sum, "desires are states we intend to satisfy while we have them, beliefs are states we intend to abandon if false" (Gregory 2012, 604). However, in the psychological terms in which this is stated it is unacceptable. How is the DoF of the second-order intentions explained? Appeal to Humberstone's account to answer this question launches a regress; otherwise the account is left incomplete (Gregory 2012, 605–606). Also, what about "desires the subject is alienated from", and hence doesn't intend to fulfil (Humberstone 1992, 81; Frost 2014, 435)?

Frost (2014, 442) usefully introduces the notion of *committed* DoF accounts: "a *committed* DoF theorist . . . believes (a) that there is a unified kind of 'fitting'

[21] The *vertical/horizontal* metaphor for the contrast is Searle's (1974–5).

proper to DoF theory, (b) that the DoFs are internally related by some kind of symmetry that merits talks of two and only two directions in this context, and (c) that (a) and (b) together reveal something deep about the structure and nature of the mind that is worth encapsulating in a simple and evocative technical term". He goes on to question extant committed accounts, for the sort of reasons just rehearsed, and then moves to offer a non-committed one. I lack the space here to critically engage with his proposal; but I'll outline a committed view which, as far as I can tell, is not subject to the problems just outlined and hence overcomes his pessimism.

The normative view of speech acts and mental attitudes sketched above provides one. For the thetic DoF, Green's account is good enough: it is for the subject of the acts (and resulting states) to be generically *liable* to being correct or incorrect depending on how things are. Intentions (and other members of what I'll call, by analogy, the *directive family*) lack this feature: the intention in moving a basketball player to shoot from behind half-court just before time expires, like the performance it motivates, is perfectly correct even if the shot misses. Is there a sufficiently symmetrical characterization of the telic DoF for members of the directive family, elaborating on the metaphorical point that in that case there is some sort of mistake "in the world" if it doesn't "oblige" the relevant attitude—that it somehow "should" oblige? I cannot go into this in any depth here, and in fact we don't need to. Let me just say the following. As summarized in Section 6.1, following Alston I have argued that the sort of *liability* applying to the directive family is *constituting a reason* for the represented proposition to be fulfilled (García-Carpintero 2013, 2019b)—thus for "the world to oblige". Wrong directives are those that fail to create one. Given this, I propose to explain the telic DoF thus: it is for the subject/agent of the acts (and resulting states) to be liable to be correct or incorrect depending on whether the states are *a reason* for the conditions they represent to obtain.

This is thus, in sum, the way I suggest we should capture the asymmetry:

(ThN) One must: th(p) only if p

(TeN) One must: te(p) only if te-ing p is a (conditional) reason for p

The present account does better than other committed normative proposals in the literature. In response to the problem of desires from which one is alienated, Humberstone (1992, 81) contends that "'intention' might not be quite the right word" for the "controlling states" his account poses. But then, what are they? On the present account, they are just norms. They explain why and when we should have Humberstone's second-order intentions: thetic states that $p$ are those that there is reason not to have when $\neg p$; telic states that $p$ are those that there is reason for them to be fulfilled (for $p$ to come about) when correct. Zangwill (1998) offers

a "horizontal" normative account, as opposed to the present "vertical"one in terms of the normative relations between the state and the condition in the world satisfying it. "Horizontal" accounts are normative variants of Smith's. They are *uncommitted* because they appeal to relations with other states, to be independently accounted for, thereby disregarding (b) and hence (c) in Frost's *desiderata* above (Sobel and Copp 2001, 52; Frost 2014, 438).

Following Alston's (2000) account of directives, the present proposal has two normtive notions for telic states ('must' and 'reason'), and just one for thetic states. Gregory (2012, 611) offers a structurally symmetrical account, but for this he needs to have "subjective" reasons for the former ("objective" for the latter). This will not do: "There are often said to be two sorts of reasons, objective reasons and subjective reasons, but that is like saying that there are two sorts of gold, objective gold and subjective gold, or real gold and apparent gold. Appearing to be something is not a way of being that thing" (Williamson 2017, 179).

## 6.4 Direction of fit for F-imaginings

The speech acts that determine fictional contents are on my account directives, but this doesn't settle the question we are addressing, which is *what the DoF of F-imaginings*—those that such speech acts invite audiences to entertain—*is*. What is it? Researchers on the imagination talk about different *projects* that it can serve, in which "various imaginings are woven together into a continuous cloth, although only some of the strands are visible on the surface at any particular spot" (Walton 1990, 17). I think this is literally correct (cf., e.g., Kind 2013, 143 ff; Stock 2017, 184 ff). There are unbidden imaginings (say, tunes that stick in our auditory imagination, even as we try to get rid of them), but many others are products of our intentions (Langland-Hassan 2015, 2016). We put the imagination to the service of particular projects: evaluating counterfactuals, making decisions, exploring emotional reactions, indulging in self-aggrandizing fantasies, wish-fulfilment by proxy, or sexual gratification. I think that the wavering I have illustrated about the DoF of imaginings manifests the fact that there may not be an absolute answer to the question of which one they have: it might be one or the other, depending on the character of the specific project it serves. This is one more reason why focusing on F-imaginings, as Stock suggests, is really apt. So, is there a reason to think that, given the particular projects that F-imaginings serve, they have thetic DoF, as I take Stock to suggest?

We would already have our answer if imaginings in general, or at least F-imaginings in particular, were just a special kind of belief, as Langland-Hassan (2012) argues; or if we espoused the semantic contextualist account of fictional discourse by Predelli and others mentioned in Section 6.2 above, on which fictional discourse consists of assertions whose target has been shifted from the

actual world to a fictional one in the way we sometimes shift the location referred by 'here' or the time by 'now' from those of the utterance. Also, it might be thought that Stock's suggestion would be correct if (as Williamson 2016 suggests) imaginings always were of the sort that "we constrain . . . to fit the facts of the world as we know them" (Kind 2018, 244)—i.e. what Langland-Hassan (2016) calls 'guided chosen imaginings', Stock 'counterfactual imagining' (2017, 129), and Kind (2018, 229) 'imagining under constraints'.[22] For in such cases imaginings plausibly inherit the DoF of beliefs and assertions. I think, however, that some imaginings don't have thetic DoF, even if they are somehow constrained by the actual facts. Thus, consider those serving projects like indulging on self-indulgent fantasizing for its own sake—cf. Gaut (2007, §7.3.2).

However, the account I outlined in Section 6.2 offers a good general reason to ascribe that DoF to F-imaginings—to imaginings aiming to working out fictional contents. For it allows for a clear sense in which F-imaginings have the thetic DoF: when engaging in them, we are "liable to be correct or incorrect depending on how things are" *in the world of the fiction*; and we are expected by the author to depend, in doing this, on independently established procedures regarding how to do so. This is what makes *prima facie* compelling the contextualist account of fictional discourse by Predelli and others—although, as said in Section 6.2, we do not need to buy it to get the same result: believing in a fictional world is just imagining it, as prescribed by a fiction. This, as I emphasized above, captures the measure of objectivity that F-imaginings have, as was stressed by Walton (1990, 39, 42) in the work that established this tradition. In a nutshell, "[i]magining aims at the fictional as belief aims at the true" (1990, 41).

Along these lines, Currie (2010, 636) says: "How things are represented [in *Oliver Twist*] makes it appropriate to imagine that Sykes is a violent criminal. Imagining that he is a violent criminal is made appropriate, not by what is true, but by what is true according to the story, and appropriateness is what we aim for when we engage with stories". Cf. also Rami and Zimmermann (2017, 74–75): "the author who uses [a] sentence literally as part of an act of telling or creating a story A, stipulates that there is some world of fiction that is described by A and in which Frodo is a hobbit born in the Shire. . . . if anything like this is a correct description of the conventional effects of such a fictional use of [it], then the audience's natural and adequate cognitive reaction to it would be a belief that there is such a fictional world with the features described by [it] rather than a mere

[22] Mole (2009, 479–480) offers a good discussion of such constraints—norms on account of which fiction-makers can correctly be said to make mistakes. In arguing that F-imaginings lack direction of fit, Sutrop (2002, 341) mistakenly assumes that it is "evident that fictional speech acts are totally different from assertives". It is not just that this is not evident; I think it is false. Fictional speech acts at the service of the imaginative projects advanced by, say, historical fictions or biopics do involve assertive acts, and they do so by the very nature of those genres (García-Carpintero 2016, 2019c).

act of imagination".[23] By contrast, fantasizings obey TeN: they are appropriate when their occurring produces or constitutes, in the relevant bouletic worlds, the values why we indulge in them—which they don't need to.

As Stock points out (2017, 139), some fictions (pornographic films, romantic novels) are mainly intended to serve imaginative projects of the sort I just gave as illustration of those lacking the thetic DoF. In fact, as Sandro Zucchi pointed out to me, to some extent this must be true of all valuable fictions: what would make them valuable, hence fitting the norm my account poses for fiction-making, is the value we place on the imaginings they lead us to. But we should distinguish between the imaginative project of appropriately conjuring up a fictional world—perhaps merely instrumental and lacking much value in itself—and the projects for which this is instrumental. The former have the thetic DoF on my proposal, while the latter may well have the telic one. The former are constitutive of F-imagining projects; the latter are merely consequential to those worth indulging in.

It will be helpful to conclude by comparing my proposal to Alward's (2010b, 357), who also crucially appeals to fictional worlds: "the narrator in a fictional story is, in effect, the reader's informant regarding the fictional world described or generated by the text". Such a narrator is a construct analogous to Lewis's (1978) or Currie's (1990) fictional tellers: an "informant" who "reveals" (1990, 358) to us the fictional world. Alward wants the narrator to be sufficiently different from Lewis's or Currie's fictional tellers, to avoid the pitfalls he rightly points out in these accounts. But, like them, he needs the narrator to be engaged in something like ordinary assertoric discourse, because the central piece in his argument for ubiquitous fictional narrators is what he takes to be the need to appeal to Grice's standard maxims to account for implicit content (Alward 2007, 403; 2009, 324–325; 2010b, 356).[24]

I endorsed above the "report model" (Matravers 1997), on which verbal fictions always have narrators. My reasons are those that Wilson (2011, 116–117) articulates, in response to Kania's (2005) scepticism. Kania (2005, 52) says that a fictional world "is just stipulated . . . by the artist through the work", but he doesn't tell us how this stipulating goes. In fact, the best account we have for how fiction-makers in verbal fictions convey the explicit features of the fictional world (to my mind, Walton 1990) has them simulating the assertions that would be made in the relevant context by means of the declaratives they put forward—these are the

[23] Cf. also Currie (2020, 51–52). Chasid (2017, 264–266; forthcoming) offers a quite similar view, which he shows to be extensible to other, more "private" imaginative projects.

[24] Like Kania (2007, 406), I find Alward's argument unwarranted. I have characterized implicit content on the model of indirect speech acts, which generalizes the case of implicatures—in which assertoric acts are inferred from conventionally indicated equally assertoric acts. In the way that an expression of gratitude ("thanks for not browsing our magazines") conveys a request ("don't browse our magazines!"), acts of explicit fiction-making convey implicit contents (García-Carpintero 2019c). We don't need Alward's heavyweight fictional narrators here (see below); actual fiction-makers are enough.

crucial props in verbal games of make-believe. And these assertions have assertors, explicit as in *Don Quixote* or implicit as in *Pride and Prejudice*.

This, however, gives only a minimal notion of fictional narrators (Wilson 2011, 111). For one thing, this view does not automatically support fictional narrators for fictional films;[25] to defend their existence there, we would need to find justification (of the sort that Wilson (2011) himself offers) that there is also in them some sort of fictional showing—some kind of assertives deploying iconic visual and sonic features, along the lines of maps or documentaries.[26] Alward's view, on the other hand, conceptually requires a narrator (a fictional teller) whenever a proposal to imagine is made.[27] Moreover, it is not clear to me that Alward can avoid some of the objections he raises against Lewis and Currie. He assumes (2010b, 358) that explicit fictional narrators like Kinbote in *Pale Fire* are in such cases the narrators his account posits. However, how does Kinbote "reveal" to us the fictional world of the work? Alward suggests that this is analogous to what happens with ordinary "informants", who might also "reveal" facts in conflict with what they explicitly say. But the case of fiction is fundamentally different from that of a real informant in the actual world.

In previous work (García-Carpintero 2007), I gave a counterexample to Lewis's view based on Cortázar's *A Continuity of Parks*, which poses a challenge to Alward's view as well. The plot features a reader "transported" to what he takes to be a fictional story that, unbeknownst to him, narrates events simultaneously unfolding while he reads, ending in (we are led to infer) his being killed "off-screen". This is the central plot element of the fiction, which any competent interpreter must imagine for proper appreciation. However, one would never infer it on the assumption that one is told the story in a nearby world, trying to find out there what a fictional narrator is telling "as known fact". The required inferences wildly defy epistemic credibility.[28] To infer as it is required to understand the work, we take it instead as being created by an *actual* fiction-maker, aiming to generate interesting imaginings.

The example also tells against Alward's proposal. If Alward's "informant" is subject to ordinary epistemic constraints, we would never infer that she is "revealing to us" the absurdly improbable facts constituting the story's central plot

[25] Wilson (2011, 112) also raises doubts for some verbal cases, mentioning for illustration works mostly consisting of dialogue like Ivy Compton Burnett's *The Present and the Past*. But such dialogues are explicitly reported and contextualized by an omniscient narrator: "'Oh, dear, oh, dear!' said Henry Clare. His sister glanced in his direction . . . ".

[26] See Terrone (2020) on the role of "perceptual imaginings" in docudrama.

[27] Davies (2010, 389–391) convincingly argues that proposals to imagine in philosophical thought-experiments don't follow the report model: the contents to be imagined are directly presented, without going through the pretend assertions of a fictional teller.

[28] Matravers (1997, 79) makes the same point: "It would be reasonable for a listener to conclude, were he told a supernatural tale such as *The Master and Margarita*, that the narrator was completely off his head and none of what he said was true; we all know that cats do not smoke cigars, neither are they dead shots with Mauser automatics".

element. The example supports instead fiction-making accounts, because on them content determination depends primarily on what fiction-makers actually do, not on what they pretend the narrators they "portray" do. In short, although—like the contextualist account of fictional discourse by Predelli (1997) and others—Alward's view is close to mine, and helps visualize the explanation of the thetic DoF of F-imaginings that I have advanced in order to develop Stock's suggestions, we do not need to buy it to get the same result. Representing a fictional world with the thetic DoF is just imagining it, as prescribed by a fiction.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the normative view of fictionality I have defended elsewhere allows us to put in a perspicuous way (and better than alternative accounts) an intriguing claim by Kathleen Stock regarding the imagination. I have put it in terms of the *direction of fit* asymmetry: imaginings prescribed by fictions have the DoF of judgements and assertions, as opposed to that of directives and intentions. After outlining my normative account of *fiction-making* and explaining how it allows for a compelling account of the DoF asymmetry, I have concluded by offering an account of why the imaginings required by fictions have the thetic DoF. I have also suggested that imaginings relevant for other imaginative projects might have different DoFs, which would explain the wavering on this issue that we find in the literature.

## Acknowledgements

Financial support was provided by the AEI, Spanish Government, research project FFI2016-80588-R; by the award ICREA Academia for excellence in research, 2018, funded by the Generalitat de Catalunya. This work received helpful comments from audiences at The Language of Fiction conference, and talks at the LOGOS seminar and at the University of Tasmania, Hobart; thanks to audiences there, and to Dirk Baltzly, Alon Chasid, Madeleine Hyde, Hans Kamp, Eliot Michaelson, Kathleen Stock, Andreas Stokke, Enrico Terrone, and Alessandro Zucchi. Thanks to Michael Maudsley for the grammatical revision.

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