Death on the Freeway: Imaginative resistance as narrator accommodation*

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1 Introduction

Consider the following fictional discourse from Weatherson (2004):

(1) Jack and Jill were arguing again. This was not in itself unusual, but this time they were standing in the fast lane of I-95 having their argument. This was causing traffic to bank up a bit. It wasn't significantly worse than normally happened around Providence, not that you could have told that from the reactions of passing motorists. They were convinced that Jack and Jill, and not the volume of traffic, were the primary causes of the slowdown. They all forgot how bad traffic normally is along there. When Craig saw that the cause of the bankup had been Jack and Jill, he took his gun out of the glovebox and shot them. People then started driving over their bodies, and while the new speed hump caused some people to slow down a bit, mostly traffic returned to its normal speed. **So Craig did the right thing, because Jack and Jill should have taken their argument somewhere else where they wouldn't get in anyone's way.**

The final, bolded sentence of (1) is jarring. So much so that our engagement with the fiction seems to break down. Why should this be, given that much of what we find in fiction is strange, impossible, or immoral, without hindering our engagement? For example, readers of *Lolita* may find Humbert Humbert repulsive, but that doesn't prevent them from engaging with the fiction, i.e. imagining as prescribed by Nabokov's text.

A related observation is that the bolded sentence of (1) seems false in the world of the fiction. That is, it appears that the author of (1) cannot make it fictionally true that Craig did the right thing. Why should this be, given that an author has

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the authority to turn a human into a bug (as in in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*), invent playing cards who are loyal servants to the queen (as in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) and describe (truthfully in the fiction) a sociopath who robs, rapes, and assaults innocent people for his own amusement (as in Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*)?

Such questions are familiar from the rich philosophical literature on *imaginative resistance*: an instance in which "an otherwise competent imaginer finds it difficult to engage in some sort of prompted imaginative activity" (Liao & Gendler 2016).[1] In this squib, we propose that some evaluative propositions, such as in (1), trigger the accommodation of an (unreliable) narrator. It is well known in semantics that, depending on various factors, accommodation can be more or less difficult for the processor. (1) is on the extreme end of the difficulty scale for two reasons. First, right up until the final statement, the story adheres to the standard conventions of a third person omniscient narrative, i.e., without a specific narrating character in the story; narrator accommodation forces us to break out of this frame, and reconceptualize the story as told from a first person perspective. Second, the accommodation is triggered rather indirectly, as opposed to a more explicit introduction of a narrating character through a first person pronoun (cf. 'Call me Ishmael').

In what follows we sketch a formal implementation of these ideas. In the next section, we develop a toy analysis of fiction using a version of the dynamic semantic framework of Discourse Representation Theory (DRT, Kamp 1981). Crucial to our analysis will be the idea from Lewis 1978 that in all worlds compatible with a fiction there must be someone telling the story ("as known fact"). Our DRT/Lewis-based framework for representing fiction allows us to distinguish first person or, following Genette's (1980) now standard terminology, *homodiegetic narration*, from third person or *heterodiegetic narration*: only in the homodiegetic case is the narrator represented explicitly by a discourse referent, on a par with the rest of the fictional characters. In this way we try to capture the idea, well known from narratology research, that heterodiegetic narration involves an "effaced" narrator that is not part of the story and never referred to (e.g. by indexicals) in the fiction. Subsequently, in section 3, we build on our toy analysis to include different update mechanisms for dealing with both reliable and unreliable information. Combined with the idea of accommodating a narrator discourse referent, this will allow us to analyze (1). In section 4, we consider an objection from Byrne (1993) to the Lewisian modal semantics of fiction underlying our DRS boxes, namely that there are narratorless fictions. We discuss how to revise our Lewisian assumptions in light of the objection and what this may mean for analyzing imaginative resistance discourses as instances

1 The notion of imaginative resitance is usually traced back to David Hume. It was revived, in large part, due to work by Moran (1994) and Walton (1994) and responses to that work by, e.g. Gendler (2000), Yablo (2002) , Matravers (2003), Weatherson (2004), Stock (2005), and Todd (2009).

of narrator accommodation.

2 Fiction in DRT

2.1 DRT

We take a standard version of Discourse Representation Theory (DRT, Kamp 1981) as our starting point. That is, in interpreting a discourse spoken or written the interpreter updates an information state, represented in the formal language of Discourse Representation Structures (DRS).

We'll use a standard box notation for DRSs. By way of illustration, the box in (2b) is meant to represent the information conveyed by the single sentence mini-discourse in (2a):

(2) a. Farmer John owns a donkey.

b.

x y
farmer(x) donkey(y) john(x) own(x,y)

The top compartment houses the discourse referents, i.e. variables representing the entities that the discourse is about. The bottom compartment contains descriptive conditions, expressing properties of, and relations between, discourse referents.

The syntax of the DRS language is just a notational variant of that of first-order logic, and the model-theoretic semantics is static as well. The dynamic nature of DRT resides in the way utterances in a discourse are interpreted as successive updates on the discourse context. A single utterance doesn't express a proposition but a context change potential, i.e. a way to transform an input DRS, representing the information conveyed by the discourse thus far, into an output DRS, representing the information increase due to the current contribution.

To illustrate, say the mini-discourse in (1) continues with (3).

(3) He's feeding it a carrot.

The *DRS construction algorithm* has to add the information of the new sentence to the input DRS in (2). One of the key characteristics of the algorithm is its distinct treatments of indefinites and definites: the indefinite *a carrot* introduces a new discourse referent 'z' and accompanying condition 'carrot(z)' into the input DRS, while the pronouns (*he*) and *it* are treated as *anaphoric*, meaning they introduce free variables (u, v) looking for antecedents. Formally, anaphora are resolved by unifying them with suitable[2] antecedent discourse referents (u=x, v=y):

2 Suitable antecedents are salient, accessible, and matching in associated descriptive content and/or

(4)

x y z
farmer(x) donkey(y)
john(x) own(x,y)
carrot(z) feed(u,v,z)
u=? v=?

$\rightsquigarrow$

x y z
farmer(x) donkey(y)
john(x) own(x,y)
carrot(z) feed(x,y,z)

The result is a new, model-theoretically interpretable DRS, representing the information conveyed by the two-sentence discourse. This DRS then can serve as input for the interpretation of a new sentence.

2.2 Fiction and narrators

To model the interpretation of fiction in DRT we'll first need to distinguish two basic kinds of narration. The first kind that we consider is called *homodiegetic narration*, in which the narrator is herself one of the protagonists in the story, and hence does not have full access to what other characters are thinking or doing behind her back. The second kind of narration that we consider is called *heterodiegetic narration*, in which the narrator is a more or less omniscient, unintrusive abstract entity surveying the events occurring in the story world, including the protagonists' innermost thoughts and feelings, and presenting them to the reader.[3]

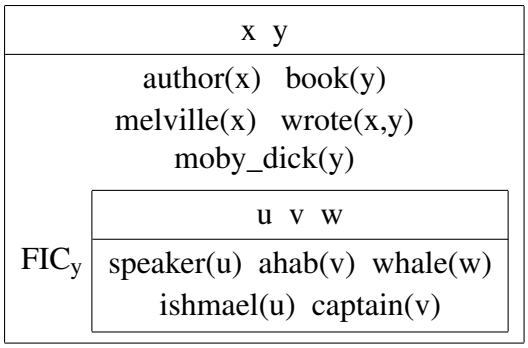
Applied to DRT, we propose that the distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration comes down to the presence or absence of a discourse referent representing the narrator. To see how this works, let us first consider the DRS in (5), which represents a case of homodiegetic narration. Crucially, note the intensional fiction operator, $\text{FIC}_x\varphi$, interpreted as "in all worlds compatible with fiction x, φ holds" (Lewis 1978).[4]

semantic features (van der Sandt 1992).

3 For present purposes, we don't discuss various forms of second person narration and countless other narrative experiments.

4 Cf. Semeijn (2017) for an account of how the interpretation of a fictional text leads to an information update under the fiction operator, or Maier (2017) for an alternative account in terms of imagination updates.

(5)



The DRS in (5) represents the information that there's an author, Melville, who wrote a book, *Moby Dick*. In this book there is a speaker, the homodiegetic narrator (henceforth: narrating speaker). There is also a whale, and so on.

Note that representing the narrating speaker in the way proposed makes it possible to anchor local indexicals (*I*, *here*, *now*, *today*). For example, if the book *Moby Dick* contained the statement *I love the whales here*, then the first pronoun would pick out the narrating speaker, Ishmael, while *here* would pick out Ishmael's location.

A difficulty in making sense of (5) concerns spelling out the nature of the accessibility relation of the fiction operator, i.e. when exactly is a possible world compatible with a fiction told or written in our world? The first attempt that Lewis considers is that a world w' is compatible with a fiction x as told in w iff in w' story x is told as known fact and w' differs less from w than any other world in which story x is told as known fact.

One of the much discussed features of this approach is that we're only considering those fiction worlds that are closest to our own, a feature Lewis borrows from his account of counterfactuals (Lewis 1973). In other words, all truths about the real world automatically carry over to the fictional domain, unless contradicted by the text (what Walton (1990) calls the 'Reality Principle'). Questioning the adequacy of this prediction, Lewis formulates another proposal where it's not the actual world but the overt beliefs of the author and his community that is the source from which implicit fictional truths are imported (Walton's 'Mutual Belief Principle'). Either will do for our current purposes. What concerns us is a different feature of Lewis's approach, viz. the fact in all worlds compatible with a fiction there must be someone telling the story ("as known fact"). In standard narratological terminology, every story-world has a narrator who is moreover distinct from the actual author, as they inhabit different worlds. This view is controversial and we will come back to consider an objection to it in section 4. In the remainder of this subsection, we would like to show how adopting something like Lewis's fiction operator allows us to represent both homo- and heterodiegetic fictional narratives in DRT. Subsequently, in section

2.3, we show how Lewis's fiction operator allows us to relate Weatherson's Death on the Freeway discussed at the outset to a well known example of accommodation.

Let us, then, consider our proposed analysis of heterodiegetic narration in (6):

(6)

x y
author(x) book(y) tolkien(x) wrote(x,y) lord_of_the_rings(y)
FIC_y: u v frodo(u) sam(v) friends(u,v)

The DRS above represents the information that there's an author, Tolkien, who wrote a book, *The Lord of The Rings*, and in this book there are two friends, Frodo and Sam. Crucially, notice that unlike in (5), there is no narrating speaker represented in (6). Nevertheless, on account of our Lewisian modal semantics of FIC, there actually *is* such a narrating speaker in all worlds compatible with the fiction. This non-representational but semantically presupposed narrator captures the narratologists' effaced narrator of a heterodiegetic narrative. The observation that such a narrator cannot be referred to by an indexical such as *I* follows from the absence of a suitable discourse referent for such a pronoun to be anchored to (assuming the more or less standard anaphoric/presuppositional account of indexicals in DRT, Zeevat 1999; Bittner 2007; Maier 2009; Hunter 2013). Alternatively, the use of *I* in a seemingly heterodiegetic context might also trigger a switch between heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narration, by a process of accommodation, to which we turn next.

2.3 Accommodation

In this subsection, we would like to compare our implementation of the effaced narrator idea to Barbara Partee's missing marble:

(7) Nine out of the ten marbles are in the bag. #It is under the sofa.[5]

The first sentence in (7) entails the existence of a (contextually) unique marble not in the bag, so why isn't it possible to refer to this missing marble with a pronoun like *it*? DRT's answer is that a pronoun requires an antecedent discourse referent, and applying the DRS construction algorithm to (7) does not lead to the introduction of a discourse referent for the missing marble.

5 Cited by Heim (1982).

The analogy to heterodiegetic narration, as we have analyzed it, is this: the omniscient narrator is there in all worlds compatible with the fiction, just like the marble is there as a matter of logical necessity. Yet it can't be referred to by a pronoun, because the DRS lacks a discourse referent representing the intended antecedent.

As noted in debates about Partee's marble, some tweaks (pause, extra information, more descriptive content in the anaphoric expression) will allow us to *accommodate* an antecedent discourse referent, rendering the discourse felicitous (cf. Roberts 1989).

(8) Nine out of the ten marbles are in the bag.

a. I've been looking for hours and . . . hey wait, there it is!

b. {The missing marble/the red one/the bloody thing} is under the sofa.

By analogy, we would expect to find parallel cases of narrator accommodation. In fact, whenever we pick up a book for the first time and don't know in advance whether the narration is homo- or heterodiegetic, we start without a narrator discourse referent. If the first line we read is, say, 'Call me Ishmael', then we then have to accommodate a discourse referent for the narrating speaker in order to interpret the first person pronoun. Hence, many homodiegetic narratives require an initial narrator accommodation.

More interesting are stories that start out showing tell-tale signs of heterodiegetic narration (third person pronouns referring to protagonists, past tenses, lack of expressives and indexicals, signs of omniscience, free indirect discourse thought reports etc.), but then seem to switch to a homodiegetic style.

A first example comes from *The wild ass' skin* by Honoré de Balzac, in which the first section of the novel is clearly heterodiegetic, told from the point of view of an impersonal and omniscient narrator. The story is about a young man, Raphael de Valentin, who purchases a shagreen that will fulfill any wish of its owner, shrinking slightly upon the fulfillment of each desire. The second section of the novel, however, is clearly homodiegetic, told in the first person, from the point of view of the protagonist Raphael de Valentin himself. This shift can be modeled within our proposed analysis as involving accommodation, but not yet quite accommodation of a narrator discourse referent. What we're accommodating is merely the information that De Valentin is now the narrating speaker, and hence the anchor for first person pronouns and other indexicals. Formally, we add a descriptive condition of the form 'spkr(x)', where x is the already established discourse referent for De Valentin.

A narrative mode switch due to marble-like accommodation of a new discourse referent halfway through the story also occurs, for instance in metanarratives, like

the following:[6]

(9) Once upon a time there was no time. No time and no space. No heroes, no plot, no drama, no obstacles, no twists, no turns, no hero's journey, no redemption, nothing to learn, nowhere to go, and no one needing to be saved. The sky was blue. The trees were green. People danced for no reason, sang like the birds, and looked up at the sky and down at the ground with the same reverence. This was the time before story, before the need to understand, make meaning, convince, persuade, teach, transmit, entertain, distract, or make a single point. The point? It was already made. And everyone already understood. Hmmm... **I** thought about writing THIS story, but then it dawned on **me**, how presumptuous that would be, how full of paradox, contradiction, Facebook Likes, Tweets, lists of things to do, copy edits, **me**, cash projections, reviews, complaint, business, and all the other assorted flora and fauna of life AFTER the story needed to be told. So **I** took out the garbage, washed the dishes, and walked the dog. This is not available on Amazon, nor will it ever be.

In cases like this, the only way to interpret the indexical pronouns (in bold) is by accommodating a narrator discourse referent.[7] This would mean reinterpreting the whole story as essentially homodiegetic, i.e., told by an apparently not so impersonal or omniscient narrator as we originally assumed on account of the heterodiegetic style characteristics.

In the following section we add one final ingredient to our analysis, an account of unreliable narration, before returning to Death on the Freeway.

3 Unreliable narrators and untrustworthy speakers

Narratologists note that a narrator can (and often does) say something that is false in the fictional world (Booth 1961; Zipfel 2011). Examples include Huckleberry Finn's naive observations about society, or Chief Bromden's hallucinations about growing and shrinking protagonists in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The question for our toy analysis developed thus far, then, is: How do we separate what's true in fiction from what the narrator tells us? In order to answer this question, let's first consider what happens in regular conversation.

6 www.ideachampions.com/heart/archives/2014/06/index.shtml

7 In fact, interpreting the hesitation marker *hmmm...* already presupposes a person-like, non-omniscient narrator.

3.1 Unreliable conversation partners

In an ideal world where communication serves merely to coordinate our joint truth seeking, any assertion that p should result in the hearer updating their beliefs with p. But this is clearly an oversimplification of the way actual communication works. We don't always believe (or even just accept or commit to) whatever our interlocutors say. Several paths have been explored for dealing with non-cooperative or otherwise unreliable conversation partners,[8] but for the sake of simplicity, we follow Eckardt's (2014) straightforward semantic proposal. Eckardt distinguishes different types of updates: Trust updates and Cautious updates:

> A Trust update is one in which the propositional content of the utterance is added directly (by intersection) to the addressee's beliefs and the common ground. Other assertion situations will only support Cautious updates. Person a asserts s, but addressee b updates her beliefs with $\lambda w.Belief_a(w,p)$, where s denotes the proposition p. Whatever we are told, we'll always have to decide whether we believe it or not. (Eckardt 2014:65-66)

As an example of a Cautious update, suppose a republican tells you (10):

(10) Trump has saved the middle class!

Hopefully, you don't update your beliefs accordingly. Rather, it is suggested that you perform a Cautious update, resulting in the following DRS:

(11)

x y
spkr(x) trump(y)
BEL_x [save_middle_class(y)]

In sum, in a Trust update we add information directly to the global DRS, as was illustrated in section 2.1. On the other hand, a Cautious update is one where we add information under a doxastic operator, as in (11). We interpret BEL-conditions as modal statements in possible worlds semantics (Hintikka 1969), i.e. $BEL_x\varphi$ is true in w iff φ is true in all doxastic alternatives of x in w.[9]

8 Most notably with the help of game theory (e.g. Asher & Lascarides 2013).

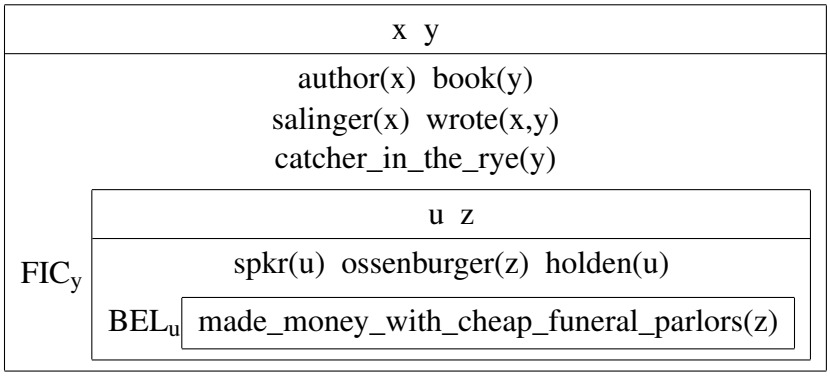
9 The distinction between Trust and Cautious updates is not meant to be exhaustive. In other cases we might want to be even more cautious, as when we suspect that the speaker is deliberately lying to us (or just bullshitting or trolling) that p. In such cases we might do a Supercautious update with p resulting in the addition of the information that the speaker says that p.

3.2 Unreliable narrators

If we distinguish Cautious updates and Trust updates in regular conversation, we could do the same within the context of fiction interpretation. First in homodiegetic narrative, when the narrator says something that is somehow inconsistent with the story developed thus far or if we have other reasons not to trust the narrator, we might not want to perform a 'fictional Trust update', i.e. take her words at face value and adding her content as facts about the story world (as represented in the box under the fiction operator). Instead, we might want to perform a 'fictional Cautious update', and conclude merely that the narrator apparently fictionally believes this, but it might not be fictionally true.

For example, in Chapter 3 of *The Catcher in Rye*, the first person narrator, Holden, asserts that he is 'the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life'. Shortly thereafter, he tells the reader that he lives in a dormitory donated by an alumnus named Ossenburger, who made all his money with cheap funeral parlors. Upon hearing this, the reader is likely to perform a Cautious update, which we can represent (roughly) as in (12):

(12)



Notice that (12) combines our proposal for analyzing homodiegetic narration in DRT with Eckardt's proposal about Cautious updates.

The more difficult cases to make sense of are ones that involve Cautious updates in heterodiegetic narration. At first blush, this may seem like an oxymoron. If there is no discourse referent representing the narrating speaker in heterodiegetic narration, as we have proposed, then what would it mean to cautiously update, i.e., which speaker's beliefs are we supposed to update? The trick is that, as we've already seen in section 2.3, a heterodiegetic narration can always switch into a homodiegetic one, by accommodating a discourse referent for the (already implicitly present) narrator. An accommodated narrator referent x can then serve as the anchor for the Cautious update's BEL$_x$-condition. Thus, after introducing a first person narrator, we can always choose not to believe what that narrator tells us. This, we claim, is precisely

what happens in Death on the Freeway.

3.3 Death on the Freeway revisited

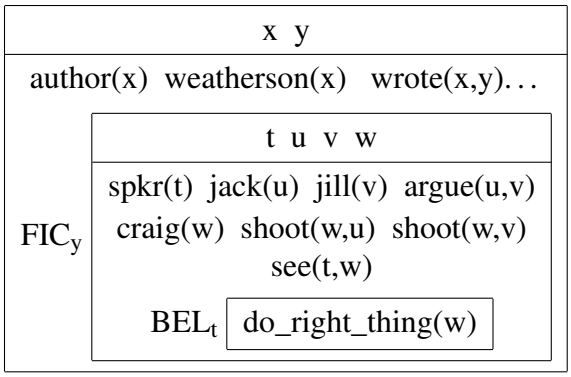
Let us now put all the pieces together. Before we get to the original Death on the Freeway, first consider the following variant. The key manipulation is the use of the first person pronoun in the final sentence, intended to bring out more clearly the switch to homodiegetic mode.

(13) [. . .] When Craig saw that the cause of the bankup had been Jack and Jill, he took his gun out of the glovebox and shot them. People then started driving over their bodies, and while the new speed hump caused some people to slow down a bit, mostly traffic returned to its normal speed. **I was there, I saw it with my own eyes, and, as far as I'm concerned, Craig totally did the right thing. Jack and Jill should have taken their argument somewhere else where they wouldn't get in anyone's way.**

While not as jarring, the final sentence still has shock value. The reader is forced to lift the omniscience from the third person narrator and conclude that she is just a character, and an unreliable one at that, as she seems to have a suspiciously immoral view of the fictional world. On our account, the shock value would be explained by a combination of two interpretive processes: First, the reader is forced to accommodate a discourse referent for a first person narrating speaker in a discourse that started off as a prototypical heterodiegetic narration. Second, the narrator's claim that Craig did the right thing clashes with our reconstruction of the story world thus far (based on the textual evidence and the Lewisian principle(s) of minimal departure from the real world or the author's community's beliefs, cf. section 2.2), so in an effort to maintain a plausible and coherent interpretation of the whole, the reader will likely opt for a Cautious update, adding the information that the newly discovered narrating speaker (incorrectly) believes that Craig did the right thing.[10] Skipping over the details, the end result would look something like this:

10 An alternative interpretation strategy would be to trust the narrator and infer that the story is about a very distant, immoral world, where killing someone like this really is the right thing to do. Presumably, a story about such a world could be written, but we don't think this is a very plausible interpretation of (13).

(14)



With this in mind, we are now ready to revisit Weatherson's original, repeated below:

(15) [...] When Craig saw that the cause of the bankup had been Jack and Jill, he took his gun out of the glovebox and shot them. People then started driving over their bodies, and while the new speed hump caused some people to slow down a bit, mostly traffic returned to its normal speed. **So Craig did the right thing, because Jack and Jill should have taken their argument somewhere else where they wouldn't get in anyone's way.**

Without the first person pronoun that overtly signalled the narrative mode switch in (13), it will be much harder for the reader to accommodate a narrator in (15). The discourse preceding the last sentence doesn't help since none of the characters can possibly be the ones responsible for the immoral thought. All we have to go on is a clash between our reconstruction of the story world, presumably somewhat similar to our own in moral and other respects, and the information, from a supposedly omniscient narrator, that Craig did the right thing in killing Jack and Jill. On our analysis, this clash can be overcome, but there's a high processing cost involved. We need to first give up the assumption that we're dealing with an omniscient narrator, i.e. switch to homodiegetic by introducing an as yet unknown narrator referent. We then furthermore have to decide that this narrator is unreliable, merely giving his own, deviant opinion on what's happening, as modeled by a Cautious update.

4 Concluding remarks

This squib proposed that the evaluative proposition in Weatherson's Death on the Freeway triggers the accommodation of an (unreliable) narrator. Given the lack of descriptive content supporting such an accommodation, it is extremely difficult for the processor. We note that we have not said anything about what accommodation

really amounts to in terms of processing. We also note that there are various kinds of accommodation processes. We have focused on the kind of accommodation that arises in Partee's missing marble example. This, we think, is sufficient to make our proposed analogy with the imaginative resistance case under consideration. However, ultimately, one would need to say more about accommodation[11] and the plethora of other examples which have been argued to be instances of imaginative resistance.[12]

In drawing the parallel with marble accommodation, our analysis crucially relied on the corollary of Lewis's proposal that in all worlds compatible with a fiction there must be someone telling the story. Byrne (1993) has provided some compelling objections to Lewis's proposal, arguing (among other things) that in many fictions it is not true in the fictional world that there is someone sufficiently knowledgeable to tell the story. And in these fictions, we have a story without a storyteller. For example, there are possible stories about the universe ending or about uninhabited empty spaces, where there couldn't be a narrator.

While we do not have a knock down argument against this objection, several comments are in order. First is the question of whether narratorless stories, if they exist, could ever lead to imaginative resistance effects of the kind considered here. Interestingly, Weatherson claims that Death on the Freeway is a narratorless story and would thus provide an affirmative answer to this question. But is Death on the Freeway really a narratorless story? Following Genette, narratologists typically maintain that every story, by definition, requires a teller, who is committed to the assertions in the text (cf. Ryan 1981; Margolin 2012). In the case of fiction, the narrator can't be the author, as that would entail that, e.g. Tolkien is committed to the existence of hobbits, but must be somehow residing in the fictional universe, overseeing things happening there. On this narratological assumption, Death on the Freeway would certainly have a narrator, implicit at first and, as we have proposed, explicitly represented as a character in the end.[13]

Still, let's suppose that, contrary to Lewisian and contemporary narratological assumptions, Death on the Freeway is, in fact, a story without a narrator. To preserve our chief insight, that imaginative resistance can be explained in terms of unreliable narrator accommodation, we only need to weaken the Lewisian semantics by removing the 'told as known fact' restriction, i.e., we define the accessibility

11 For instance, it may be that Weatherson's own analysis (involving Fodorian lower and higher concepts) will shed light on the accommodation effects that we proposed.

12 See Liao & Gendler 2016 for a recent overview and Altshuler & Haug 2017 for a discussion of examples that are directly relevant, involving discourse reanalysis.

13 If we assume that Death on the Freeway is a story with a narrator, then it remains an open question whether narratorless stories, if they exist, could ever lead to imaginative resistance effects of the kind considered here.

relation of the fiction operator as: w' is compatible with fictional discourse x in w iff the fictional discourse x is true in w' (and w' is maximally close to w etc.). The rest of our analysis will go through: Death on the Freeway still involves accommodation of an unreliable narrator. What we lose is the analogy with Partee's marble. In a way, the accommodation involved in this version of the theory is even harder, as we have to conjure up a narrator out of thin air, rather than just introduce a discourse referent that was implicitly already available. Unfortunately, a proper understanding of the varieties of accommodation strategies and their limits is still missing. We hope that future progress on these general semantic/pragmatic matters will help us decide whether this route is viable. For now, we hope that our squib at least shows that it can be rewarding to try and apply our familiar semantic tools to topics from neighboring fields, like aesthetics and narratology.

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