Logic and Fiction

John Woods

Department of Philosophy
University of British Columbia, Canada

We will consider the impact of four ontologically parsimonious principles or assumptions on the logic of fiction and on the efforts of others to produce an intellectually satisfying natural language semantics for fictional discourse.

Parmenides' Law: There is nothing whatever that doesn't exist.

Frege's Law: No referring expression refers unless there is something to which it refers.

The Particular Quantifier Law: Nothing is something unless it exists.

The Fiction Law: There is no object that any object of fiction is. The objects of fiction don't exist.

Our particular purpose will be to determine whether a plausible semantics of fiction is possible under these tight constraints. Four options will be considered.

- An imaginist semantics
- A psychology-first semantics
- An objectless truths semantics
- A no-ambiguity semantics

Bibliography:

John Woods and Jillian Isenberg, "Psychologizing the semantics of fiction", *Methodos* online, April 2010. This is background for the dual-aspect option. The paper is available on my webpage at www.johnwoods.ca

John Woods "Objectless truths", see link below, pages 15-25.

John Woods, "How robust can inconsistency get? *IFCoLoG Journal of Logic nd its Applications*, 1 (2014), 177-216. Pages 190-204 are all that's needed for the no-ambiguity option. But pages 205 onwards might also be of interest. The paper can be accessed from www.johnwoods.ca