David Lewis's Possible Worlds Theory of Fiction

Tested against Diana Wynne Jones's *Chrestomanci* Series

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Tutkielmassani liikun kirjallisuuden tutkimuksen ja filosofian raja-alueella, hahmotellen miten filosofian modaalilogiikasta tuttua mahdollisten maailmojen semanttista teoriaa voisi soveltaa kaunokirjallisiin kuvitteellisiin teksteihin ja niiden luonteen avaamiseen. Pääesimerkkinä käytän David Lewisin yritystä soveltaa kehittämäänsä realistista mahdollisten maailmojen semantiikkaa myös kuvitteellisiin maailmoihin. Toinen keskeinen teoreettinen lähteeni on kirjallisuuden tutkija Marie-Laure Ryan ja hänen tapansa kehitellä Lewisin teoriaa edelleen ja saada se sopimaan yhä paremmin nimenomaan kaunokirjallisten kuvitteellisten maailmojen analyysiin.

Tutkielmani teoriaosuuden aloitan valaisemalla lyhyesti, mitä eri muotoiluja mahdollisten maailmojen teoriat ovat filosofian piirissä saaneet. Päähuomioni osuu luonnollisesti juuri Lewisin realistiseen ja nominalistiseen teoriaan. Seuraavaksi esittelen lyhyesti, miten mahdollisten maailmojen semantiikkaa on myöhemmin sovellettu kirjallisuuden tutkimukseen ja siinä etenkin kuvitteellisten maailmojen analysointiin. Tässä päälähteinäni toimivat kirjallisuuden tutkijat Ruth Ronen ja Marie-Laure Ryan.

Tutkimuksen loppupuolella sovellan Lewisin (ja Ryanin) mahdollisten maailmojen teoriaa kahteen Diana Wynne Jonesin lastenkirjaan, *Charmed Life* ja *The Lives of Christopher Chant,* jotka kuuluvat hänen *Chrestomanci*-sarjaansa. Tavoitteenani on selvittää, onnistuuko Lewisin teoria selittämään näiden romaanien sisäisen kuvitteellisen maailman luonnetta omin voimin, vai kenties vain Ryanin teoriaan tekemien parannuksien avulla. Analyysissäni päädyn toteamaan, että ainakaan nämä kyseiset kirjat eivät vaikuta aiheuttavan Lewisin teorialle ongelmakohtia, ja että varsinkin Ryanin tekemien parannusten kanssa mahdollisten maailmojen semantiikka näyttääkin tarjoavan varsin antoisan ja varteenotettavan tavan analysoida kuvitteellisia maailmoja, kunhan modaaliloogisten ja kuvitteellisten maailmojen väliset filosofiset eroavaisuudet otetaan tarkastelussa huomioon.

Tutkimuskysymyksinäni on paitsi Lewisin teorian yleinen sovellettavuus kuvitteellisten maailmojen analyysiin, myös kysymys kuvitteellisen tekstin sisällä tapahtuvasta *viittaamisesta* ja siitä, miten kuvitteellisiin olioihin viittaamisen on eri teorioissa katsottu suhteutuvan aktuaalisiin (oikeasti olemassa oleviin) olioihin viittamiseen. Tarkastelen etenkin sitä, miten Lewis ja Ryan näitä viittaamisen lajeja teorioissaan käsittelevät sekä sitä hyvin omalaatuistakin tapaa, millä tämä kysymys nousee tarkastelun kohteeksi Wynne Jonesin romaanien yhteydessä. – Sisältäväthän kyseiset romaanit jo itsessään kokonaisen mahdollisten maailmojen realistisen ontologian. Annankin tutkielmassani hieman huomiota myös Wynne Jonesin rakentaman kuvitteellisen mahdollisten maailmojen ontologian vertailulle David Lewisin aktuaalista maailmaamme ja tälle vaihtoehtoisia maailmoja koskevaan modaaliloogiseen ontologiaan.

Avainsanat: modaalilogiikka, mahdolliset / kuvitteelliset maailmat, kuvitteellisuus, viittaaminen

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1. Introduction

In this study my aim will be to examine the nature of the *possible worlds* of modal logic and to discuss how they differ from but also how they can be seen as similar to the fictional worlds of literary theory. I will focus especially on David Lewis's possible worlds theory of fiction, first providing a general context for it (both in the realm of philosophy and that of literary theory), then discussing the theory and also the later modifications made to the theory by other theorists (Marie-Laure Ryan, in particular) and finally finding out whether this theory works in practice – i.e. whether or not it can be successfully applied to works of fiction. For this purpose I have chosen two children's novels by Diana Wynne Jones, *Charmed Life* and *The Lives of Christopher Chant*. These particular novels are especially interesting in the context of David Lewis's theory, since they contain an ontology of possible worlds within the fictional world of the novels, and this ontology even seems to be quite similar to the one Lewis talks about in the context of his realist theory of modality (and which he also uses as the basis for his later theory of fiction).

A further question which runs through the length of this study is what *referring in fiction* might mean and how the referring to fictional entities can be said to differ from the referring to entities that are also found in our actual world. In the context of this question I will quote various theorists and finally find out what it could be taken to mean in the context of Wynne Jones's novels (where there seems to be quite an unusual way of viewing the relationship

between the fictional world and the actual world[1]) and how David Lewis and Marie-Laure Ryan analyze this question in their own theories.

As far as I know, the *Chrestomanci* novels of Diana Wynne Jones and especially the ontology of possible worlds therein have not yet been analyzed in the context of David Lewis's possible worlds theory of modality. For instance, in her *Diana Wynne Jones, Children's Literature and the Fantastic Tradition* (published in 2005) Farah Mendlesohn focuses mainly on how adulthood and adolescense are depicted in Wynne Jones's novels, what is the narrator's perspective in them and how the author uses the different elements of the fantastic that can be found in her novels.[2] And in his *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper* (published in 2006) Charles Butler "provides a series of new perspectives through which to view these writers' achievements", using fields such as "history, archeology, social geography, anthropology, and postcolonial theory, as well as literary criticism"[3] as his theoretical framework. However, it is about time someone analyzed Wynne Jones's novels drawing on philosophy (and especially modal logic) as well, and that is the aim of my study.

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[1] See ch. 4.2. below.
[2] Source: Strange Horizons (online)
[3] Source: The Scarecrow Press Inc. (online)

2. David Lewis in the continuum of possible worlds semantics in philosophy

Possible worlds semantics began flourishing in modal philosophy in the 1960s when logicians rediscovered the theory of the German philosopher G. W. Leibniz (1646-1716)[4] "as a convenient tool in building a semantic model"[5] for the modal operators of necessity and of possibility. For, according to Leibniz, there is an infinity of possible worlds which "exist as thoughts in the mind of God"[6], but only one of these worlds gets to be instantiated by the divine mind, since only this one world is in fact the best one. It is naturally the one in which we live and to which we refer as the "real" or "actual" world.[7] Soon it was discovered that this idea of our own (the actual) world as being just one of infinitely many different possible worlds genuinely gave logicians a whole new set of tools for dealing with questions of modality.[8]

Leibniz's theory thus seemed to provide all the necessary means for finally "explaining what modal claims might take as their subject matter"[9] and also save the intuitive notion of the truth in the modal sentences of ordinary language from the criticism given by the philosophers of the empiricist position. In his *Metaphysics: Contemporary Readings* Michael J. Loux[10] argues that the empiricist refusal to believe that any nonlinguistic items could constitute the subject matter for modal claims can be traced back as far as David Hume (1711-1776), who indeed writes in his *Treatise of Human Nature* for instance of necessity, that it is "something, that

[4] Siukonen, 1995, 7
[5] Ryan, 1991, 16
[6] Ryan, 1991, 16
[7] Ryan, 1991, 16
[8] Loux, 2005, 181
[9] Loux, 2001, 152
[10] Loux, 2001, 152

exists in the mind, not in objects."[11] More recent critics were the logical positivists of the 20th century, who argued that modal discourse about the nonlinguistic world was simply "meaningless".[12] However, armed with Leibniz's theoretical construction, logicians of the 1960s (such as Saul Kripke and Jaakko Hintikka) began working on semantic models that were "shaped like [--] a system of worlds"[13] and using these in order to make sense out of modal operators and concepts.[14]

However, Leibniz's theory proved to be something that could be developed in two quite different ways. Staying closer to the original theory, theorists like Alvin Plantinga formulated the theory known as *actualism*, in which the world which we ourselves inhabit is given the same kind of ontological priority as Leibniz gave to the "best possible world" which God chooses to instantiate (or the one which "obtains", as Plantinga[15] puts it). In these theories all the other possible worlds were considered less real (for Plantinga for instance, they are possible but unobtaining "states of affairs"[16]) and modal concepts were to be understood (in terms of other modal notions) inside a network of modality that did not need any further reference to the nonlinguistic world(s). As long as there was an *actual* referent about which modal claims could be made, then the entire network of modality had this same *transworld*[17] entity as its sole referent. This entity could then be seen as being involved in both obtaining and unobtaining

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[11] Hume, 1985: 1739, 216
[12] Loux, 2001, 152
[13] Ryan, 1991, 16
[14] Ryan, 1991, 16; Loux, 2001, 152-153
[15] Plantinga, 1974, 44
[16] Plantinga, 1994, 146-147
[17] See ch. 2.2. below for a longer discussion on the notion of *transworld individuals*.

states of affairs, without the need to make use of multiple referents for different possibilities, for instance. That is why Loux calls these the *nonreductive* theories of possible worlds.[18]

There were also certain possible worlds semantics theorists who developed Leibniz's original theory to the point where they could in fact start calling themselves empiricists – for according to these theorists all of modality was reducible to something empirical and concrete (namely all the equally real and concrete individuals[19] in existence in all the various possible worlds), which provided the basis for assigning truth values to modal sentences. These theories do include multiple, and all equally real, referents (actual *and* non-actual) as the various counterparts or versions of a certain entity about which modal claims can then be made. In these *reductive* theories of possible worlds, then, all modality is reducible to concrete individuals and the various properties of these individuals. The most influential theorist of this position is David Lewis, whose theory of the nature of modality is examined in further detail in chapter 2.2.

2.1. The concept of possible worlds in philosophy

As mentioned above, the concept of possible worlds was taken out of Leibniz's earlier theory and developed further in the context of modal logic, where it was used especially in order to make sense out of what are known as *de dicto* and *de re* modalities.[20]

De dicto modality has to do with the modal *sentences* (propositions) in a language, and the truth values of these. For instance, the sentences (1) "two plus two equals four" and (2) "Al

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[18] Loux, 2001, 154
[19] See ch. 2.2. for further discussion.
[20] Loux, 2001, 151-152

Gore lost the election" are examples of true sentences, in which the "mode" of the proposition differs in such a way that the former is a necessary truth, whereas the latter is a contingent (possible) truth. Something like (3)"that bachelor is married" would be an example of a necessarily false proposition (or an impossible proposition).[21] Now, in order to explicate the distinctions between these propositions in the context of possible worlds semantics, (1) can be analyzed as being true in every single possible world, (2) in at least one of the possible worlds – and in the case of a contingent truth, the actual world (that we inhabit) being among the worlds that the sentence is true in, and (3) as being true in none of the possible worlds. In other words, here the modal operators "function as something like quantifiers over possible worlds".[22]

De re modality, on the other hand, has to do with the different *properties* of individuals – what is necessary to them, what is impossible to them and what is contingent to them. For instance, we can say of someone that he is "contingently the president of the United States" and that he is also "necessarily a person", where the former case entails that even though the person is the president of the United States in the actual world, there is at least one possible world in which he is not, and the latter case entails that he is a person (a human being) in every single world in which he exists.[23] So once again, it is all about quantification over possible worlds and the different (versions of the same) individuals living in them. It is easy to see the appeal of this kind of analysis, which seems to be very much in line with our intuitive beliefs about what could or could not happen, what someone might have become (had things been a little different for him/her) or what something necessarily is.

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[21] Loux, 2001, 151
[22] Loux, 2001, 151, 153
[23] Loux, 2001, 151, 153

However, what possible worlds theorists cannot seem to be able to agree on, is the degree of *realism* that should be granted to the possible worlds (other than the actual one, that is), and this has indeed become one of the main differences between the various kinds of (reductive or nonreductive[24]) theories of possible worlds which have been put forth. In her book *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, Ruth Ronen analyzes the opposing viewpoints and lists what she sees as the three different basic views. The first of these is called *modal realism*, which Ronen labels "radical", and under which she lists only the theory of David Lewis, the second she calls *moderate realism*, which includes the actualist theories and theorists such as Plantinga, Peter van Inwagen and Robert Stalnaker, and the third one is named the *anti-realist* view[25], where possible worlds are in fact denied "any kind of heuristic or explanatory power [--] and are definitely refused any kind of actuality"[26], the most noted theorist of which is Nelson Goodman.[27]

To sum up, the anti-realists seem to refuse to deal with possible worlds at all, the actualist theories are in fact quite a sophisticated way of dealing with possible worlds, but it has been noted[28] that of all these theories it is the realist position of David Lewis, which most suits the intuitions of readers of fiction, and so in the context of this study (which attempts to link the possible worlds of modality with the possible worlds in literary theory), it is his theory

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[24] Loux, 2001, 154

[25] According to the anti-realist position, possible worlds should be altogether rejected because "there is no way to qualify the reality of *the actual* or *the real* to which other worlds present a variety of alternate possibilities" (Ronen, 1994, 23) (italics in the original). In other words, all worlds (including the actual one) are seen as mere versions which are "subject to radical relativism" (Ronen, 1994, 24), without any chance to access true knowledge.

[26] Ronen, 1994, 23

[27] Ronen, 1994, 21-24

[28] By, for instance, Ronen (1994, 24) and Ryan (1991, 21).

which is the focal point of discussion, and which is therefore discussed in more detail in the following sub-chapter.

2.2. David Lewis on possible worlds

David Lewis's theory of the nature of possible worlds falls into the category of *nominalist*[29] theories of modality, which attempt to explain the nature of modality by means of applying set theory to what they regard as the sum total of all the individual concrete particulars in all these different worlds. In other words, nominalist theorists attempt to analyze modal notions by reducing them into something more basic and concrete – i.e. talk about concrete particulars and the sets that these form as they exemplify all the different properties in different ways.[30] To Lewis this means that possible worlds are to be regarded in the same way as we usually regard the actual world that we inhabit, which for Lewis is the realist way of viewing the world(s) as collections of concrete particulars, which cannot be reduced to anything else.[31] According to Lewis, then, possible worlds differ from the actual world "not in kind but only in what goes on at them"[32]. Therefore the worlds are all equally real and equally existent, and the actual world is denied all priority and any kind of special ontological status in relation to other possible worlds.[33]

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[29] Nominalism supports an ontology incorporating only concrete individuals and denies the existence of what are known as *universals*. For instance, nominalists argue that there is no universal, abstract quality called "wisdom" – the term is merely the sum total of all the (concrete) wise individuals in the world(s). And the same holds for all other abstract notions as well (Loux, 2001, 7-10).

[30] Loux, 2005, 186-188, 191

[31] They are not reducible to "sets of sentences", for instance (Lewis, 1994 (B), 183-184).

[32] Lewis, 1994 (B), 184

[33] Loux, 2005, 193. This is a viewpoint very different from the *actualist* theories of possible worlds (mentioned above in ch. 2. and 2.1.), which do indeed regard only the actual world as existing. See, for instance, Plantinga's *The Nature of Necessity*.

In relation to its inhabitants, however, the actual world still possesses a certain priority over all the other possible worlds, since it is the world to which its inhabitants (i.e. we) *refer* with the phrase "the real world" or "the actual world". But this is also true of the inhabitants of every other possible world – everyone refers to the world into which he/she happened to be born with words such as "real" and "actual". The result of this kind of analysis of the term "actual" is that the term is pushed to the category of *indexical* words, which also includes words like "I", "here" and "now".[34] So even Lewis, as strict as he is about the equal reality of all the possible worlds, does not deny our justification in saying that the other possible worlds are not really, actually existent in the exact same way as our own world is (to us, that is). In other words, Lewis does not deny that as the inhabitants of *this* world, it is in fact the only world which is actually existent to us. But he does want to make our talk about the existence of possible worlds somewhat clearer by making a distinction between the verbs "to actually exist" and "to be", where the latter verb refers to all the entities in all the different possible worlds, whereas the former only refers to the entities in our own (the actual) world.[35]

According to Lewis, in addition to all possible worlds being equally existent and real, all that we can ever hope to know about them is that, apart from logic, everything in them (including the laws of physics) can be very different from what they are in the actual world.[36] Lewis's material realism becomes apparent in the way he regards all the worlds as equally material, denying that they could be regarded as certain kinds of sets of linguistic or even

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[34] Lewis calls this his "indexical theory of actuality" (Lewis, 1994 (B), 184).
[35] Lewis, 1994 (B), 184-185
[36] Lewis, 1994 (B), 187-189

mathematical entities, as some other theorists[37] have suggested. In fact, Lewis argues that if we were to regard possible worlds as some sort of sets of abstract entities, this would only result in our own world being reduced to a similar set among the rest of the worlds, which obviously feels intuitively wrong.[38]

One of the logical outcomes of Lewis's realist and nominalist theory seems to be, then, that all the various "versions" of the same individual scattered all around these different possible worlds are equally real and existent, each one living in its own actual world. But how can anything exist fully in several different places at the same time? Furthermore, if these individuals are all on different paths of life, experience different things, and possess different properties, how is it logically possible for them to even be the exact same individual? Here we come to the philosophical problem of the "indiscernibility of identicals", which Michael J. Loux formulates as follows:

> Necessarily, for any objects, *a* and *b*, if *a* is identical with *b*, then for any
> property, Φ, *a* exemplifies Φ if and only if *b* exemplifies Φ.[39]

So, if we are to accept (and Lewis makes a point of wanting to accept this) the intuitive notion that we can indeed assign truth values to the modal sentences of ordinary language, which seem to entail the notion of the various versions of the same individual living their separate and

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[37] W. V. O. Quine has put forth the idea that possible worlds could be regarded as "certain mathematical structures representing the distribution of matter in space and time" (quoted from Quine's article "Proportional Objects" in Lewis, 1994 (B), 187-189). Lewis has criticized the theory for relying too heavily on contemporary (actual) physics and for the intuitively odd conclusion that our own world can be reduced to a mathematical entity as well. However, it is not necessary to dwell further on a theory of this kind in the context of this study.

[38] Lewis is an enthusiastic supporter of the truth of "ordinary language" and the prephilosophical opinions about the ways of the world therein. See Lewis, 1994 (B), 182, 186.

[39] Loux, 2005, 194

different lives in their different circumstances (worlds)[40], it seems we also have to accept the

logical contradiction that follows: We are forced to accept that the same individual can possess

several, even contradicting, properties at the same time, so that *a* both exemplifies and does

not exemplify Φ. These "same individuals" that are taken to somehow remain the same even

when we talk about the different things that can happen to them (and result in them having

contradicting properties in the different worlds in which they simultaneously exist), are known

in modal logic as *transworld individuals[41]*.

Lewis is very aware of this logical contradiction that results from the principle of the

indiscernibility of identicals, and decides to avoid the contradiction by beginning (a little

puzzlingly, perhaps) with denying that transworld individuals exist at all, and concluding that

every individual in fact exists only in the one world which is actual to them.[42] However, Lewis

cannot simply state something like this and then leave it at that, since a theory that puts

forward the idea of individuals existing in just the one world which is actual to them, would

result in the modality of ordinary language being stripped of truth-values altogether, which is

not what Lewis[43] wanted to accomplish in the first place. Furthermore, this kind of theory has

to deal with a whole new kind of problem: For in possible worlds semantics (and in the modal

sentences of ordinary language) it is precisely the fact that individuals do exist in different

worlds which is supposed to make it possible to make sense out of (and talk about) their *de re*

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[40] Meaning, for instance, the counterfactual sentences of the form: "If I hadn't walked in the rain yesterday, I wouldn't have caught a cold." In which the "I" is understood as the exact same person as the speaker who did walk in the rain and subsequently did catch a cold (my own example). Lewis has written extensively on counterfactual sentences, see for example his *Counterfactuals* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986: 1973).
[41] Loux, 2005, 194
[42] See, for example, Lewis, 2001, 205-208.
[43] Lewis, 1994 (B), 182, 186

modal properties. As was mentioned above[44], according to the possible worlds semantics analysis of these modal properties, if an individual has a certain property in all the different worlds, in which he/she/it exists, then that property is necessary to him/her/it. If they have that property in just some (but not all) of the worlds in which they exist, it is a possible property to them. – In case the actual world is among the worlds in which the individual exemplifies the property, then they exemplify it contingently, whereas impossible properties are not exemplified by the individual in any of the worlds in which he/she/it exists.[45]

If we were to assume that all the individuals never existed in more than one world, it would lead to the conclusion that they possessed all the same properties in all of the worlds (i.e. the one world) in which they existed, which is the distinctive characteristic of an *essential* property. It would then follow that individuals had no properties that were not necessary and essential to them, and so the distinctions between the necessary, possible, impossible and contingent would fall apart altogether. – Which is clearly an undesirable outcome, since the successful analysis and maintenance of that very distinction was after all supposed to be the single most impressive achievement of possible worlds semantics.[46]

The falling apart of the distinction between the *de re* modalities is not something that Lewis is willing to accept, either, and therefore he puts forth his own suggestion for an alternative to the unsatisfactory notion of transworld individuals, which he proceeds to call the *counterpart theory*.[47] Lewis argues that all individuals have counterparts in various possible worlds, and these counterparts are what make the modalities of ordinary language (and

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[44] See ch. 2.1.
[45] Loux, 2005, 196-197
[46] Loux, 2005, 197
[47] Lewis, 2001, 190

philosophy) possible. The relationship tying these counterparts together is considerably looser than the strict logical identity of transworld individuals – a modification which avoids the aforementioned problem that results from the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals. In his article "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic," Lewis[48] formulates the counterpart theory in detail and lists the primitive predicates of the theory as follows:

Wx (x is a possible world)
Ixy (x is in possible world y)
Ax (x is actual)
Cxy (x is a counterpart of y)

In addition to these predicates Lewis[49] formulates eight postulates, according to which the primitive predicates are to be understood. The postulates are as follows:

P1: $\forall x \forall y$ (Ixy $\rightarrow$ Wy)
(Nothing is in anything except a world)

P2: $\forall x \forall y \forall z$ (Ixy & Ixz $\rightarrow$ y = z)
(Nothing is in two worlds)[50]

P3: $\forall x \forall y$ (Cxy $\rightarrow$ $\exists z$ Ixz)
(Whatever is a counterpart is in a world)

P4: $\forall x \forall y$ (Cxy $\rightarrow$ $\exists z$ Iyz)
(Whatever has a counterpart is in a world)

P5: $\forall x \forall y \forall z$ (Ixy & Izy & Cxz $\rightarrow$ x = z)
(Nothing is a counterpart of anything else in its world)[51]

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[48] Lewis, 1994 (A), 110-111
[49] Lewis, 1994 (A), 111
[50] It is precisely this postulate which most clearly differentiates Lewis's theory from the ones (the theory of Saul Kripke, for instance. See Kripke, 2001, 226) which attempt to endorse some form of transworld identity, since according to this postulate "things in different worlds are *never* identical", and so the counterpart relation works as a "substitute for identity between things in different worlds" (Lewis, 1994 (A), 111) (italics in the original).
[51] This could perhaps be reformulated as "Nothing is a counterpart of anything, besides itself, in its world" to make it more clearly compatible with P6. Lewis does not really elaborate on P6 at all, although this postulate seems to be

P6: $\forall x \forall y\ (Ixy \rightarrow Cxx)$
(Anything in a world is a counterpart of itself)

P7: $\exists x\ (Wx\ \&\ Ay\ (Iyx \equiv Ay))$
(Some world contains all and only actual things)

P8: $\exists xAx$
(Something is actual)

According to the theory, the relation of individuals to their counterparts is a relation of similarity of various degrees. For instance, the counterpart for the individual x in world W is the individual in some other world W_1, which is more similar to the x of W than any other individual in W_1. An individual may have more than one counterpart in a world[52], and not all individuals have to have counterparts in all of the different possible worlds[53]. The counterpart relation is not necessarily *symmetric* nor is it necessarily *transitive* (x in W can resemble y in W_1 more than any other individual in W and z in W_2 can resemble x in W with equal force, but that does not mean that z in W_2 needs to resemble y in W_1 as much as it resembles x in W).[54]

The counterpart theory is thus able to bring back the distinctions between the *de re* modalities: only some of x's counterparts possess its contingent properties, but each and every one of them possesses the necessary (essential) properties of x. Therefore, the essence of x is that attribute (= the collection of all and only the attributes / properties) that it shares with "all and only its counterparts". Furthermore, not all counterparts of x have to have the same

in need of some further explication. I take it to mean, simply, that anything in a world is more like itself than anything else in that world.

[52] For instance, the individual x in W might have as counterparts the individuals y and z in world W_1, who are in fact twins and hence both resemble the x of W more than anything else in W_1. Note however, that the y and z of W_1 could not be counterparts of each other, or they would violate postulate 5 above.

[53] As an example of an individual that has no counterparts in the actual world, but can still be in existence in some other possible world, Lewis mentions the individual known as *Batman* (Lewis, 1994 (A), 113). It is rather interesting that in this context Lewis does not analyze further the *fictional* Batman of the actual world, whereas in his article "Truth in Fiction" (published about 10 years later), it is precisely this notion of the possible nonfictional counterparts that is used to make sense of the nature of fictional beings. On Lewis's theory of fiction, see ch. 3.2.

[54] Lewis, 1994 (A), 112-113

essence, as long as they share at least as their contingent properties the properties which are included in x's essence.[55]

Thus the counterpart relation provides the means by which we operate in other possible worlds and it is what makes it possible for us to truly talk about what we would have been like, if things had been different. It is true that the identity relation between the counterparts is looser and more indirect than the identity of transworld individuals, but at least in this way the theory is able to avoid the problem that rises from the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals, which in effect makes it impossible for transworld identity to exist at all.[56]

However, it seems that Lewis is not able to provide any clear limits as to how loose this similarity relation can in fact be. He even talks about counterparts that have different ancestors, which begins to sound a little counterintuitive. – Should the individuals with different ancestors even be regarded as counterparts of one another? As noted above, for Lewis it is enough for y to be x's counterpart, if y possesses at least contingently the properties that are included in x's essence. But then, what are these essential properties? Lewis is not able to provide any detailed analysis of these, the only ones he mentions (as preliminary suggestions) are the properties of being *human* and being *corporeal*.[57] But if these are all we should stick to, does it not follow that everyone (every human being) could have been anyone else as well? Here modal freedom seems so unrestricted that Lewis's theory can even be said to have lost most (if not all) the explanatory power of modality it originally seemed to possess.

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[55] Lewis, 1994 (A), 120-121
[56] Lewis, 1994 (A), 126-127
[57] Lewis, 1994 (A), 121

3. Possible worlds in literary theory

"It is not the poet's business to tell what happened, but the kind of things that would happen –
what is possible according to possibility and necessity."
- Aristotle[58]

Above is Aristotle's lovely "early expression" of the "relevance of the conceptual apparatus of

modal logic to the theory of fiction"[59], as Marie-Laure Ryan calls it in her *Possible Worlds,*

Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory. With these words Aristotle is of course in fact

highlighting the difference between history (or non-fiction) and fiction, and he proceeds by

comparing the work of a historian such as Herodotus with the work of the poets who write

fiction. "The true difference" between the two types of writers is for Aristotle, then, that

whereas the former "relates what has happened, [the latter relates] what may happen"[60]. He

also continues that "[p]oetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history:

for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular"[61].

However, in spite of Aristotle's early formulation of the relevance of possibility and

necessity in the context of fiction, the concept of possible worlds did not really enter into

literary theory until the mid-1970s. Before that fictionality had been seen merely as a property

of texts (and not having anything to do with the extratextual world[s]) by literary theorists and

pretty much ignored by philosophers.[62] In the 1970s however, among literary theorists there

arose a disenchantment with their former framework of literary structuralism, and theorists

began realizing that there might be a new angle from which the hitherto quite neglected topics

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[58] *Poetics,* ch. 9.2. (as quoted by Ryan, 1991, 17).
[59] Ryan, 1991, 17
[60] Source: The Internet Classics Archive: *Poetics*
[61] Source: The Internet Classics Archive: *Poetics*
[62] Ronen, 1994, 2

such as literary reference and fictional worlds could be addressed.[63] And of course during the previous decade, as has already been mentioned[64], modal logicians accomplished their rediscovering of Leibniz's theory of possible worlds (and were fairly soon applying the new theory to fiction as well: David Lewis's article "Truth in Fiction" was first published in 1978), and at roughly the same time speech act theorists[65] also began considering fiction for the first time.

The speech act theorist John Searle's article "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse" seems to have been quite an important landmark on the road to applying possible worlds semantics to fiction, since it can probably be named one of the first serious attempts to analyze what *referring in fiction* could mean and how it should be viewed. Furthermore, Searle's analysis of the importance of the author's *intentions* in creating a fictional text has not usually been challenged in subsequent possible worlds theories of fiction.[66] So, according to Searle, in the act of creating a fictional text, the author is in fact *pretending* to make assertions about certain (imaginary) events and/or people, and is thus not committing to the truth of any of the assertions (contrary to what would be the case with genuine statements). Nevertheless, the intention to *deceive* is not present in this act (which in effect is what distinguishes fiction from lies). In other words, the author and the reader must be in mutual understanding of the fact that it is this act of pretending which makes a certain text fictional, and this (text's becoming fiction) is accomplished by means of suspending "the normal operation of the rules relating

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[63] Pavel, 1986, 9

[64] See ch. 2.1.

[65] John Searle's "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse" was first published in 1975 (in *New Literary History* 6), and in 1991 Ryan still called it "the best known illocutionary account of fiction" (Ryan, 1991, 61).

[66] In fact, I have yet to find a theory that does challenge it. Among the theorists who agree with Searle in this (in their own theories of fiction) are for example Lewis (2004: 1978), Plantinga (1986), Currie (1990), Walton (1990), Ryan (1991) and Ronen (1994).

illocutionary acts and the world"[67]. In fiction, then, the word "red" for example still *means* the same as it does in the context of genuine, truth-functional statements, but it does not *refer* to any red objects.[68] In fact, none of the fictional statements in a fictional text refer to anything, since the very act of referring is not real, but pretended.[69]

The consensus on the correctness of Searle's analysis of the author's intentions has not stopped subsequent theorists from criticizing other aspects of his theory, though. According to Marie-Laure Ryan, the problems in Searle's theory begin with his seemingly unproblematic notion of the *subject* (as the author), which has been accused of being "largely illusory" and too idealized in knowing for sure and in a detailed way whether or not "they are standing behind their utterances".[70] Furthermore, Ryan[71] argues that Searle's distinction between fictional and nonfictional statements which can occur inside one and the same fictional text leads to problems, which could easily be solved with using the concept of possible worlds instead. For in Searle's theory, there is a distinction made between statements about *actual* people and places (for example, Napoleon in *War and Peace* and Baker Street in the Sherlock Holmes stories) and statements about *fictional* events, places and people, in which the former are taken to refer to their appropriate referents in the actual world, whereas the latter are not taken to refer to anything. But this results in, for instance, the Sherlock Holmes stories becoming "a patchwork of serious statements spoken by Conan Doyle, and of fictional statements spoken by the

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[67] Searle, 2004, 115
[68] Searle, 2004, 112-115
[69] Another theory of fiction, which is logically very close to Searle's, is *conventionalism,* developed, for instance, by Barbara Herrnstein Smith in her *On the Margins of Discourse* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978).
[70] Ryan, 1991, 62
[71] Ryan, 1991, 64

substitute speaker Dr. Watson"[72] and furthermore, it also leads to the undecidability of who it is that is in fact the speaker of a sentence such as "Sherlock Holmes lived on Baker Street", which mixes fictional and factual elements together. According to Ryan, this sort of indeterminacy and vagueness as to who-it-is-that-speaks-in-fiction (and if they refer to something or not) can easily be dealt with if one applies the concept of possible worlds to fiction. For in the possible worlds theory of fiction which Ryan puts forth, once the reader takes the initial step into what Ryan calls the *textual reference world* of the fictional text, there ceases to be any "logical difference between speech acts referring to [fictional people] and speech acts referring to Napoleon", for example.[73] This will suffice on Ryan's theory for the time being, since it will discussed in further detail later on[74].

So on the whole, what the theory of possible worlds (originally developed, after all, in order to be used in the context of modal logic) seems to have to offer to literary theory, as Ryan argues, is first of all the useful *metaphor* of "world" to "describe the semantic domain projected by a fictional text"[75], a fact which has also been noted by Thomas Pavel, who has remarked that the notion of a world as "an ontological metaphor for fiction" is simply "too appealing to be dismissed"[76]. In addition, possible worlds theory has provided literary theory with the concept of *modality* to, as Ryan puts it, "describe and classify the various ways of existing of the objects, states and events that make up the semantic domain".[77]

[72] Ryan, 1991, 64
[73] Ryan, 1991, 65
[74] See ch. 3.1.
[75] Ryan, 1991, 3
[76] Pavel, 1986, 50
[77] Ryan, 1991, 3

Furthermore, possible worlds theory is able to deal with the problems of what is *true* in a work of fiction and indeed with the relations (which, as has been noted, were already addressed to some extent by Aristotle[78]) between all the various semantic domains of fiction and *reality* – two questions which, according to Ryan, were both "considered heretic by orthodox structuralism".[79] In a similar vein, Ruth Ronen concludes that as a result of possible worlds semantics entering into literary theory, fictionality "is no longer defined as a property of texts: it is either viewed as a type of speech situation, as a position within a culture, or as a particular type of logic or semantics."[80] To this she adds that the concepts of necessity and possibility, transworld identity and the concepts which refer to world constituents, and to modes of existence (such as incompleteness of being and nonexistence) have indeed supplied "the grounds for reorienting literary theory toward questions of reference, ontology and representation"[81]. Ronen also admits that in the context of literary theory, the concept of a possible world has become a widely used metaphor, but she adds that it seems that the concept has actually been "fully incorporated into the literary discipline without a sufficient clarification of its original meaning."[82] For according to Ronen, the only way in which fictional worlds can in fact be seen as possible worlds is when "part of the logico-semantic features of the latter are ignored."[83] What she means by this (and the specific features of the possible worlds of fiction in general) will be discussed in the following sub-chapter.

[78] In his *Poetics*, see also the beginning of this chapter.
[79] Ryan, 1991, 3
[80] Ronen, 1994, 3
[81] Ronen, 1994, 5
[82] Ronen, 1994, 7
[83] Ronen, 1994, 8

3.1. The concept of possible worlds in literary theory

One of the main differences between the possible words of modal logic and the possible worlds of literary theory lies in their respective relationships with the actual world. As Ronen argues, the possible worlds of modal logic are "based on a logic of ramification determining the range of possibilities that emerge from an actual state of affairs", but the worlds of literary theory, or *fictional worlds* are in fact "based on a logic of parallelism that guarantees their autonomy in relation to the actual world"[84]. Thus, as Ronen notes, the facts of a fictional text have nothing to do with relating what could or could not have occurred in actuality, but rather they tell about what "did occur and what could have occurred in fiction"[85]. So in other words, fictional worlds are taken to be completely autonomous and separate from "the real world", although in certain ways they are still dependent on the actual cultural and historical reality inside which the fictional worlds were first created, holding "more or less obvious affinities" with this reality.[86] However, according to Ronen they are not to be taken to any extent as *alternatives* to the actual world in the same way as the possible worlds of modal logic are, but merely as possibilities of actualizing some world which can be either "analogous with, derivative of, or contradictory to" the actual world in which we live.[87]

As they are not any kind of modal extensions of the actual world (as opposed to the possible worlds of modal logic, again), according to Ronen fictional worlds in effect have a complete modal structure of their own[88], and as Ryan argues, have in fact their own "actual

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[84] Ronen, 1994, 8
[85] Ronen, 1994, 9
[86] Ronen, 1994, 15
[87] Ronen, 1994, 50
[88] Ronen, 1994, 87

world"[89] and various possible "satellite worlds"[90] revolving around it. Ryan analyzes the term

fictional world as meaning the actual world of the textual universe, which the fictional text

projects. This is called the Textual Actual World (or TAW) and there is a further distinction made

between this world and the Textual Reference World (or TRW), which Ryan proceeds to analyze

as "the world for which the text claims facts" and so "the world in which the propositions

asserted by the text are to be valued"[91].

The TRW is regarded as the center of a system of reality comprising various Alternative

Possible Worlds (APWs), which are taken as the "other" possible worlds in relation to the TRW

– i.e. the other ways things in the fiction might go / have gone, and also the fictional characters'

various belief-worlds, their wish-worlds and so on, on a parallel way to how the modal possible

worlds are taken to revolve around the actual world in modal philosophy.[92] However, there is

an additional world called the Narratorial Actual World (NAW), which does not really have a

counterpart in the modal system of philosophy. This is the world we are given by the narrator

of a fictional text, and its separateness from the TRW (and maybe even from the TAW[93]) makes

it possible for the narrator to be unreliable (i.e. tell lies about the TRW, or misrepresent it in

other ways).[94]

So, as Ryan argues, for as long as the reader is immersed in a work of fiction, "the realm

of possibilities is recentered around the sphere which the narrator presents as the actual

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[89] This kind of analysis immediately brings to mind Lewis's indexical theory of actuality (see ch. 2.2. above), and Ryan does in fact mention Lewis's theory in this context (Ryan, 1991, 21).
[90] "Satellite world" is Ryan's term (1991, *vii*).
[91] Ryan, 1991, *vii*, 23
[92] Ryan, 1991, *vii*, 111
[93] Depending on whether the TAW is taken to mean that which "the text as a whole describes as actual; or that which the narrator presents as such". In the latter case, TAW = NAW (Ryan, 1991, 27).
[94] Ryan, 1991, *vii*, 27. Note that the readers of a particular work of fiction can perceive such unreliability (lies) by comparing the NAW with the TRW.

world". With this recentering, the reader is thus pushed into a whole new system of actuality

and possibility, in the context of which he/she discovers "not only a new actual world, but a

variety of APWs revolving around it". Ryan takes the notion of the *game of make-believe*[95] from

Kendall Walton's earlier theory[96], and concludes that in as much as "we know that the textual

universe, as a whole, is an imaginary alternative[97] to our system of reality", still for the duration

of this kind of game, "we behave as if the actual world of the textual universe were *the* actual

world"(italics in the original).[98] To explicate further the relation of the AW to the TAW and the

relation of the author to the narrator of fiction (or the "implied speaker"), Ryan[99] lists the

following five axioms:

1) There is only one AW
2) The sender (author) of a text is always located in the AW
3) Every text projects a universe. At the center of this universe is the TAW

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[95] The notion of the game of make-believe is basically a further development of Searle's analysis (see ch. 3. above) of the *pretending* that the author of a fictional text engages in when making statements about fictional beings. It is the implicit agreement between the author and the reader to pretend that what is presented is to be taken as if it was real (Walton, 1990, 85-89). Or, as Lewis (2004: 1978, 121) puts it, as if it was "told as known fact". Walton's notion is also a significant part of Gregory Currie's theory of fiction (as in Currie, 1990), which is also based on (and developed further from) the theory of David Lewis.

[96] In fact, the theoretical idea of the game of make-believe was in a way foreshadowed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as early as the beginning of the 19th century when he argued that "poetic faith" was constituted by the "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment" on the part of the reader (Coleridge, 1967, 169). However, in his article "Emotion in Response to Art" (in *Emotion and the Arts,* 1997) Jerrold Levinson calls this viewpoint the "suspension of disbelief solution" to what is known as the paradox of readers' actual emotions towards fictional beings, and criticizes it as follows: "[--] though popular in the nineteenth century, it unacceptably depicts consumers of fiction as having both a rather tenuous grip on reality and an amazing ability to manipulate their beliefs at will" (Levinson, 1997, 23). Levinson clearly distinguishes Coleridge's view from the later theory of Kendall Walton, naming the latter the "make-believe, or imaginary, solution" (Levinson, 1997, 26). He makes the distinction between the two viewpoints based on the different degrees of reality granted in the theories to readers' *emotions* towards fictional entities. For his full discussion on the topic, see *Emotion and the Arts,* pp. 20-34.

[97] It might seem at first that Ryan uses the word "alternative" a little carelessly here, since Ronen, on the other hand, refuses to apply this word to fictional worlds at all, as fictional worlds "are not alternative ways the world might have been" (Ronen, 1994, 51-52). However, the word is here followed by the notion of a "system of reality" which Ryan defines elsewhere (1991, *vii*) as a "set of distinct worlds" thus making it clear that the term "alternative" should not be taken to mean a possible alternative to our actual world, but that the two systems are altogether autonomous and separate, and alternatives to each other only in this more indirect and abstract way.

[98] Ryan, 1991, 23

[99] Ryan, 1991, 24-25

4) The TAW is offered as the accurate image of a TRW, which is assumed (really or in make-believe) to exist independently of the TAW

5) Every text has an implied speaker (defined as the individual who fulfills the felicity conditions of the textual speech acts). The implied speaker of the text is always located in the TRW

In other words, any work of fiction is characterized by the "open gesture of recentering, through which an APW is placed at the center of the conceptual universe"[100], and thus becomes the world of reference. In the process of this, the reader of fiction shifts his/her attention from the AW to the TAW / TRW. And when the sender (author) in the AW has stepped into the role of the narrator and selected (or created) a new actual world, "the utterance act of this narrator must be analyzed for the new system of reality. Within this system, the narrator can produce accurate representations, lies, errors, or fiction"[101].

Another important difference between the possible worlds of philosophy and the fictional worlds of literary theory is that the former are always taken to be logically complete[102], whereas the latter are inherently incomplete[103]. In fact, as philosophical possible worlds are *intensional* worlds, they are worlds of which the very talking about what is included in them (and what is not) "determines the collection of things referred to by these worlds or to which these worlds are applied"[104], and with which it is always taken for granted that they either include or preclude every single "thing" – entity, property, proposition, state of affair; whatever one chooses to call these. However, this is not the case with fictional worlds, which are, after

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[100] Ryan, 1991, 26
[101] Ryan, 1991, 27
[102] The reason for this being as follows: For the *de dicto* and *de re* modalities to be at all analyzable in possible worlds' terms (see ch. 2.1.), then for every proposition and every property, it must either be included or not be included in all the possible worlds. All the possible worlds' theorists are also in agreement on this, whether they support actualism (e.g. Plantinga) or realism (e.g. Lewis) about possible worlds (Loux, 2001, 151-157).
[103] Ronen, 1994, 90, 93
[104] Ronen, 1994, 28

all, dependent on what the fictional text says about them. Furthermore, the worlds of modal logic can never include contradictions or impossibilities, nor can they, for instance, violate the logical law of the excluded middle, but in fiction (in postmodern fiction, in particular) impossible and logically contradictory worlds can (and do) indeed exist.[105]

To begin with the notion of the *incompleteness* of fictional worlds, when analyzing this aspect of fictionality, Ronen concludes that there are three basic facets in the mode of existence of fictional entities, which gives them a sense of incompleteness. First of all, she argues, represented objects in a work of fiction are "never fully determined in all their aspects", and that hence certain "spots of indeterminacy" are never totally absent from fictional objects.[106] In other words, a fictional object can in a sense possess and not possess a certain property simultaneously (in formal logic: to have p *and* ¬p), whenever the text (the narrator) does not explicitly determine which alternative is in fact the case, simply because there just is no *referent*[107] "in relation to which either p or ¬p [could] be determined" – with (p *and* ¬p) being of course the very formulation of a violation of the law of the excluded middle, as well.[108] According to Ronen, this incompleteness of fictional entities is both logical and semantic, and the logical part results from the aforementioned fact that being the way they are (as incomplete as they are), many conceivable statements about a fictional entity are left (logically) undecidable, whereas the semantic side comes from the fact that as they are constructed by

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[105] Ronen, 1994, 55-56. Ryan gives as an example of contradictory fiction Robert Pinget's *Le Libera* in which a certain character is simultaneously dead and alive in the TAW (Ryan, 1991, 38).
[106] Ronen, 1994, 108
[107] Ronen excludes from this analysis the "counterparts of historical beings" (Ronen, 1994, 109) which can also be included in fictional texts, since they do indeed have extratextual referents. So it seems that Ronen is following along the lines of Searle's earlier analysis of the nature of fictional entities here, although she does not explicitly mention Searle's theory in this context. See for instance, Searle's "The logical Status of Fictional Discourse" (2004: 1975).
[108] Ronen, 1994, 109

language, the characteristics and relations of fictional objects can never be specified in every detail (which again has to do with the fact that they lack a complete, extralinguistic, referent).[109]

One of the most notable possible worlds philosophers of the *actualist* position, Alvin Plantinga, put forth in the 1970s an analysis of fictional entities very similar, logically, to that of Ronen (and Searle). He too concludes that fictional entities just do not have referents, but are in fact introduced to us by means of an "existentially qualified sentence", which Plantinga proceeds to call the *Stylized Sentence* of a story. He formulates this sentence as follows: "($\exists x$) x was named 'George' and x had many splendid adventures and…"[110], and this sentence can then be thought to include everything that a given fictional text says about a certain character / entity in it. But as to the facts / propositions that the *Stylized Sentence* leaves out altogether (for example, the proposition "Hamlet wore size ten shoes"[111]), they are left "neither true nor false" with no chance of the readers ever being able to decide which alternative is correct. So fictional texts are destined to be left incomplete, and the "names they contain denote neither actual nor possible objects". – In other words, they denote nothing at all and hence fictional stories to Plantinga "are about nothing at all".[112] However, one may wonder whether this seems like a conclusion extreme enough to be able to infuriate any enthusiastic reader of fiction, and whether it in fact goes very much against what we intuitively feel like as we read fiction. Are we really reading about nothing at all?

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[109] Ronen, 1994, 114
[110] Plantinga, 1974, 160
[111] About which Shakespeare never made a point about saying anything one way or the other in his works. This is Plantinga's own example (1974, 158).
[112] Plantinga, 1974, 158-163

In fact, not many theorists of fiction have been able to accept the kind of conclusion Plantinga reaches in his theory of fiction, but have instead tried in various ways to approach and come to terms with the problem of the incompleteness of fictional beings. For instance, there is the theory of Terence Parsons, which Ronen calls *quasi-actualism*, and in this theory fictional objects are in fact "presented as distinct and genuine objects", differing from real ones only "in terms of the set of the *extranuclear* properties associated with them"[113] (italics in the original). And it is this set which, conveniently enough, includes ontological properties, and "technical properties like completeness"[114]. In other words, both existence and nonexistence become merely alternative characterizations of entities, without the power to "stipulate the individuation and distinctness of the objects concerned".[115]

Another way of explaining incompleteness away is by "hypothesizing *various modes* or *degrees of being*"[116], which basically means merely being of the opinion that, even if fictional beings do lack "the property of existence", that does not mean that we could not nevertheless refer to them, imagine them, characterize them and qualify them. Ronen presents Thomas Pavel as a theorist of this kind of viewpoint. Still other ways of dealing with this problem are, for instance, saying that there is in fact nothing "radical" about the incompleteness of fictional beings, and nor is there anything wrong with attributing properties like "either being right-handed or not being right-handed"[117] to entities. − Or even concluding that in the minds of the

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[113] Ronen, 1994, 117
[114] Ronen, 1994, 117
[115] Ronen, 1994, 117
[116] Ronen, 1994, 117
[117] Ronen, 1994, 120

authors who create them, fictional beings are always viewed as complete, even if we the

readers do not reach a similar amount of detail when we think about them.[118]

The final solution in Ronen's list of the ways of regarding fictional beings and their

incompleteness relates to considering incompleteness as an object of aesthetic value.

According to this position, there is something called the "rhetorical effectiveness of

incompleteness" and by taking this standpoint, it can be argued that "what the story chooses

not to tell is as significant as what it chooses to recount"[119]. In this way incompleteness

becomes merely a "potential device for attaining thematic effects", which has, according to

Ronen[120], been a popular way of dealing with incompleteness mainly in literary theory, and it is

indeed easy to see that for the philosopher of logic this sort of viewpoint offers nothing.

However, as it was noted above, Plantinga's logical conclusion about fictional stories

being hopelessly incomplete and hence "about nothing at all"[121] seems to go against what the

reader of fiction intuitively feels about the world and beings he/she is reading about, and in

fact, as Ronen notes, while reading a fictional work the reader is "seldom aware of any gaps or

spots of indeterminacy".[122] Ronen argues further that, unless it is explicitly stated otherwise in

the text, "a completeness of the universe is always assumed"[123] and that the whole notion of

logical or ontological incompleteness is in fact quite irrelevant to our understanding of fictional

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[118] Ronen, 1994, 117-120
[119] Ronen, 1994, 121
[120] Ronen, 1994, 121
[121] Plantinga, 1974, 163
[122] Ronen, 1994, 108
[123] Ronen, 1994, 140

texts. Ronen's example is Anna Karenina who, strictly speaking, is logically an incomplete being, but nevertheless "not grasped as such in the process of reconstructing the fictional world"[124].

To explicate further what in fact takes place as the reader gets acquainted with the particular fictional world and the beings therein, which he/she is reading about, Ronen introduces the term *textual definitization* and analyzes this as the "inner mode of organization of the fictional domain of entities the nature of which presupposes the completeness of the entities introduced to a world"[125]. According to Ronen, then, in every fictional text "there is a particular moment when a definite description ('the house' or 'him') refers to a well-individuated [and singular] entity"[126] in that particular world. And it can be added, that from this moment on, the entity is usually intuitively regarded by the reader as complete, with a past and several possible futures, and in case it is a person, also with a full inner life complete with thoughts, opinions, fears, hopes, desires and the like. In other words, all of Ryan's[127] "satellite worlds" are in operation, there are other possible worlds, knowledge-worlds, belief-worlds, wish-worlds[128], necessities, contingent truths, essential and contingent properties – an entire modal structure[129]. To conclude the analysis of the nature of fictional beings I would like to quote Ryan as she provides what I feel to be a lovely summary of what the intuitive relationship of us readers in the actual world is to the people in fictional worlds: "Contemplated from without, the textual universe is populated by characters whose properties are those and only those specified by the text; contemplated from within, it is populated by ontologically complete

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[124] Ronen, 1994, 130
[125] Ronen, 1994, 142
[126] Ronen, 1994, 139
[127] Ryan, 1991, *vii*
[128] Ryan, 1991, 111
[129] Ronen, 1994, 87

human beings who would have existed and experienced certain events even if nobody had undertaken the task of telling their story."[130]

Ryan's analysis of what goes on when the reader of fiction steps into what she names the TAW / TRW follows along the same line of reasoning as Ronen's, concluding that the incompleteness of fictional worlds is really not a problem in the process of reading fiction.[131] However, Ryan also adds a further twist into the analysis and takes from the philosophy of David Lewis the concept of similarity between worlds[132] and applies it to fictional worlds, calling it the *principle of minimal departure*.[133] Ryan makes it no secret that she is indebted to Lewis in her analysis, and begins by outlining Lewis's earlier analysis of counterfactual statements and also his subsequent theory of fiction, with certain alterations and modifications of her own, though.

So, according to Ryan, the readers of fiction "reconstrue the central world of a textual universe in the same way [they] reconstrue the alternate possible worlds of nonfactual statements[134]: as conforming as far as possible to [their] representations of AW"[135]. Furthermore, since we regard "the real world" the realm of the ordinary, any departure from the norms of the actual world, which are not explicitly stated in the text, are to be regarded as "gratuitous increase of the distance between the textual universe and our own system of reality"[136]. And, as Ryan continues, it is indeed because of this principle that "readers are able to form reasonably comprehensive representations of the foreign worlds created through

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[130] Ryan, 1991, 23
[131] "Once we become immersed in a fiction, the characters become real for us..." (Ryan, 1991, 21).
[132] As argued by Ronen (1994, 70).
[133] Ryan, 1991, 48
[134] As David Lewis argues, that is. See, for instance, Lewis, 2004: 1978, 124.
[135] Ryan, 1991, 51
[136] Ryan, 1991, 51

discourse"[137], even if "the verbal representation of these worlds"[138] always remains incomplete. In this way, all the gaps in the "representation of the textual universe", if they are thought of at all, are in fact regarded as *withdrawn information*, and not as "ontological deficiencies of this universe itself"[139]. – This is a modification to the nature of fictional worlds which I think is a key point in understanding how the possible worlds of philosophy can be taken to resemble fictional worlds, despite the differences between them.

It should have become clear, during the course of this chapter, that (as Ronen argues) logical notions such as nonexistence and incompleteness just cannot be automatically transferred (without any modification) from the philosophical context of what is actual and possible, to the context of fictional worlds, since the possible worlds of modal logic used in this way in fact provide nothing but an "unsatisfactory explanation for fictional entities and their mode of being"[140]. The fundamental differences (as outlined in this chapter) between the possible worlds of logic and those of fiction need to be taken into consideration, if any kind of analogy is to be drawn. Furthermore, as Ronen notes, any literary interpretation of possibility is "bound to make use of possible world notions in a way that intensifies the autonomy of fictional worlds at the expense of doing justice to the logical meaning of possibility"[141].

In the following sub-chapter I will outline and analyze David Lewis's theory of fiction, as he presents it in his article "Truth in Fiction" (published in 1978) and I will also make use of

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[137] Ryan, 1991, 52
[138] Ryan, 1991, 52
[139] Ryan, 1991, 53. As an example of an exception to this way of relating to gaps in fiction, Ryan gives Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, in which the text actually offers the principle "no substance to feed on". In this novel, as Ryan analyzes, for instance, "[t]he information about the Court is so sparse and contradictory, the logic of its operations so arcane, that assimilation with familiar institutions never takes root" (Ryan, 1991, 57).
[140] Ronen, 1994, 143
[141] Ronen, 1994, 61

Ryan's later modifications to Lewis's theory, before applying the theory to two of Diana Wynne Jones's children's novels (in chapter 4).

3.2. David Lewis on fiction

Similar to his earlier analysis of the modal sentences of ordinary language[142], David Lewis again employs his conception of the real and concrete individuals (existing in all the various possible worlds) as the basis for his explanation of what fictional sentences could be taken to be about and refer to. At the beginning of his article "Truth in Fiction"[143] he mentions the fictional character Sherlock Holmes and argues that it makes more sense (intuitively) to see the character as being closer in nature to a real, historical human being (such as Richard Nixon, who is Lewis's own example[144]) than to just any other *fictional being*, which, after all, is a category that includes entities such as super-heroes from other planets, hobbits and vaporous intelligences[145], among other things. However, according to Lewis, Holmes seems to in fact have more in common with Nixon than for instance with Clark Kent[146] – meaning, for example, that both Holmes and Nixon are (at least usually thought of as) just people, without any other-worldly superpowers.

Lewis's solution to the problem of whether sentences about fictional entities *refer to* anything is to introduce a way of viewing fictional sentences as "abbreviations for longer sentences" which in fact begin with an *intensional operator* such as "In such-and-such-fiction…"

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[142] See ch. 2.2.
[143] Lewis, 2004 (the article was originally published in 1978), 119
[144] Lewis, 2004, 119
[145] All of these are Lewis's own examples. See Lewis, 2004, 119.
[146] Lewis, 2004, 119

or, for instance, "In the Sherlock Holmes stories…".[147] These kind of operators would then work as "restricted universal quantifier[s] over possible worlds"[148] and so the worlds which fall under the domain of the quantifier, include all and only the worlds in which the given story is told (i.e. where the story exists). Ruth Ronen names the use of a specific operator in fiction, which results in a "closed set of propositions"[149] for the fictional world, the most widely proposed *segregationist* solution for fiction. Ronen explicates further that this solution is segregationist in the sense that it excludes all of the fictional world from the realm of the actual world.[150] Returning to Lewis's theory, though, Lewis then proceeds to explicate further that the existence of a story in a world merely means that in such a world, the "plot of the fiction is enacted"[151] and so there are in existence all the characters of the story, "who have the attributes, stand in the relations, and do the deeds that are ascribed"[152] in the story in question.

However, according to Lewis, an important distinction must then be made between those worlds where the story is told as fiction, and the worlds in which the story is *told as known fact* (note that in both these worlds the plot of the story is enacted[153], so it becomes evident that that in itself is not a strict enough restriction to determine which worlds it is in which the fictional sentences of the story have the power of *referring* to entities). This is the part of Lewis's analysis where he too seems to be indebted to John Searle[154]: once again it all comes down to the intensions of the author (or *storyteller*, as Lewis calls him/her). As Lewis

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[147] Lewis, 2004, 120

[148] Lewis, 2004, 121. Note that these operators in fact function in precisely the same way as the quantifiers of modal logic always do. See for instance, ch. 2.1.

[149] Ronen, 1994, 29

[150] Ronen, 1994, 33

[151] Lewis, 2004, 121

[152] Lewis, 2004, 121

[153] It does not matter whether it is enacted in fiction or actually, it is nevertheless enacted.

[154] See ch. 3.

argues, the worlds in which the story actually refers to things outside itself are the worlds in which the storyteller tells the story knowing [155] it to be true, which is obviously not the case when he/she is telling a fictional story (i.e. in the worlds where the story is regarded and told as fiction).[156] Lewis continues that in the worlds where the story is told as true, "[t]he act of storytelling occurs, just as it does here at our world; but there it *is* what it here falsely purports to be: truth-telling about matters whereof the teller has knowledge"[157] (italics in the original). So the two separate acts of storytelling can in fact be seen as *counterparts[158]* of each other, highly similar (the sentences of the stories can be the same word for word) but yet different in this one crucial way: one is told as fiction (with the accompanying act of pretense) and the other as true, known facts (with the accompanying extratextual referents in existence in the world).

To explicate further the nature of fictional beings, Lewis uses Sherlock Holmes again as his example, and argues that who the name refers to in all the worlds in which the story is told as known fact, is the person who "plays the role of Holmes"[159] in that world. In other words, the person who is and does everything exactly as the character in the story is and does. In these worlds, then, the name "Sherlock Holmes" functions as an ordinary proper name and does have a referent, while in other worlds, including the actual world, it does not. However, it should be noted, that as there can be more than one such world, in which the story is told as known fact,

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[155] By insisting that for a story to be true it has to be *known to be true* by the teller Lewis precludes the possibility of a fictional story becoming *accidentally true* in case there happened to be in the world in which it is told someone who actually was and did everything precisely as it was told in the story. Since the teller does not know about this person, he/she is not the referent of the fictional character even if he/she is exactly like it (Lewis, 2004, 121).

[156] Lewis, 2004, 121-122

[157] Lewis, 2004, 122

[158] According to Lewis's earlier theory of modality, discussed in ch. 2.2. above.

[159] Lewis, 2004, 122

and as each one of these worlds has its own referent for the name "Sherlock Holmes", it is in fact not possible to differentiate between all these different people and decide which one is *the real* Holmes.[160] Furthermore, it is precisely because of this, then, that Lewis can offer his own explanation of what the problem of the indeterminacy and incompleteness of fictional beings means. If at this point of the analysis of Lewis's theory, for instance, one were to take Plantinga's example sentence "Hamlet wore size ten shoes"[161] and give an explanation for its indeterminacy inside Lewis's theory, it would go as follows: There are some worlds, in which the Hamlet story is told as known fact, in which he does wear size ten shoes, and then there are some worlds, in which the story is told as known fact and in which he wears shoes of a different size. And the fact that we cannot differentiate between these worlds and decide which one holds *the real Hamlet*, results in us being left with an indeterminacy of this fact.

However, Lewis actually goes even further in his analysis of the incompleteness of fictional beings and concludes that we *do* have a way of deciding which one of these worlds (in which the world is told as known fact) is in fact the real world of the story. Here Lewis employs his earlier analysis of counterfactual[162] sentences and argues that just as is the case with counterfactuals, with fictional sentences we should also take into consideration how much we actually *need* to depart from the actual world when thinking about situations (i.e. other possible worlds) in which the counterfactual (or fictional sentence) would be true.[163] According to Lewis, then, we "depart from actuality as far as we must to reach a possible world where the counterfactual supposition comes true (and that might be quite far if the supposition is a

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[160] Lewis, 2004, 121
[161] Plantinga, 1974, 158
[162] See, for example, Lewis's *Counterfactuals* (1986: 1973).
[163] Lewis, 2004, 124

fantastic one). But we do not make gratuitous changes."[164] In other words, it is only natural for

us to approach fictional texts as being as close to the actual world as possible when it comes to

facts that are not explicitly stated by the text. Lewis continues by formulating what he has just

argued as follows:

> A sentence of the form '*In the fiction f, Φ'* is non-vacuously true iff some world
> where *f* is told as known fact and *Φ* is true differs less from our actual world, on
> balance, than does any world where *f* is told as known fact and *Φ* is not true. It is
> vacuously true iff there are no possible worlds where *f* is told as known fact.[165]

It is precisely this formulation which Marie-Laure Ryan takes as a starting point in her own

theory of the "principle of minimal departure", but Ryan does also see problems in this

formulation, which she proceeds to modify in her own theory. First of all, she argues, the term

"*fiction f*" is ambiguous, since it does not differentiate between the Textual Actual World

(TAW) and the Textual Reference World (TRW)[166] and so leaves vague whether *Φ* should be

taken to be true in the storyteller's story itself (TAW) or in the world which the storyteller is

telling about (TRW).

 Furthermore, Lewis's seemingly unproblematic expression "told as known fact" in fact

totally disregards "the problem of the teller"[167] and is unable to take into account a teller who

deceives, makes errors, or produces fiction inside the fiction. – This is a problem which Lewis

himself also admits in his later postscripts[168] to "Truth in Fiction", in which he acknowledges

that his theory is unable to account for a narrator who tells lies in the fiction (since it is

impossible to think about a world in which such fiction was told as known fact, without the

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[164] Lewis, 2004, 124
[165] Lewis, 2004, 124
[166] See ch. 3.1.
[167] Ryan, 1991, 49
[168] In his *Philosophical Papers,* 1983, 279-280.

entire meaning of the story being completely altered). Ryan's reformulation of Lewis's earlier

formulation is as follows:

> There is a set of modal universes A, which are constructed on the basis of a fictional text f, and in whose actual world the nontextual statement p is true. There is a set of modal universes B, which are constructed on the basis of a fictional text f, and in whose actual world the nontextual statement p is false. Of all these universes, take the one which differs the least, on balance, from our own system of reality. If it belongs to set A, then p is true in TRW, and the statement 'in TRW, p' is true in AW. Otherwise, p is false in TRW, and 'in TRW, p' is false in AW.[169]

The analysis of the closest possible similarity between the actual world and the fictional world

as presented by Lewis (and modified by Ryan)[170] seems intuitively satisfactory in the way it

makes it possible for the (sensible) readers and interpreters of fiction to agree that even if, for

instance, Arthur Conan Doyle never explicitly states anywhere in the stories that Holmes in fact

"never visited the moons of Saturn" or that he "wears underpants"[171], these things should

nevertheless be viewed as true in the stories, since it would indeed be a "gratuitous" departure

from the actual world if we were to suppose otherwise. In the case of sentences such as the

aforementioned "Hamlet wore size ten shoes"[172] the theory does not work as well, though,

since the departure from actuality seems to be equally small in the case where Hamlet wore

size ten shoes and in the case where he wore shoes of a different size (precluding, obviously,

sizes that are ridiculously small or large).

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[169] Ryan, 1991, 50
[170] Ruth Ronen calls Ryan's modification of Lewis's theory an example of the difference between a philosopher's and a literary theorist's uses of accessibility relations (Ronen, 1994, 70).
[171] Both of these are Lewis's examples (Lewis, 2004, 123).
[172] Plantinga, 1974, 158

Although Lewis does not mention the sentence about Hamlet's shoes which Plantinga gives as an example of the indeterminacy of the nature of fictional beings, he does discuss certain sentences which include perhaps even more minute departures from actuality, such as the question whether "Holmes has an even or an odd number of hairs on his head at the moment when he first meets Watson",[173] and concludes that these kind of sentences must be left undecided. Yet, one gets the feeling that Lewis does not really regard this as an embarrassing flaw in his theory. (In fact, he does call these kind of questions "silly"[174] and hence perhaps not really worth regarding as the main questions that literary theories should provide answers for.)

However, according to Lewis it is not enough merely to state that the true world of the fiction is the one which differs the least from our actual world, since this would entail that, for instance, in the case of the Sherlock Holmes stories we could simply regard the London of the stories as being as similar as possible to the actual London of the 21st century (our own time). Naturally one has to have some way of taking into account the contemporary culture inside which the fiction was first written in the actual world. As Lewis argues, then, "[w]hat was true in a fiction when it was first told is true in it forevermore"[175] and, for instance, the London in which Holmes lives is forevermore the London of the late 19th century. Lewis proceeds to call the worlds in which all that was common knowledge in the community (culture) of origin of a given fictional text exists, the *collective belief worlds* of the text, and it is these worlds which determine which are the prevalent beliefs in the background of a given text and usually

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[173] Lewis, 2004, 124
[174] Lewis, 2004, 124
[175] Lewis, 2004, 125

implicitly included in the text as well.[176] These are also the worlds which make it possible to analyze in detail how it is that actual, historical people and places (such as Napoleon, Baker Street) can also be referred to inside fiction – if the person (or place) can be taken to be part of a given culture's common knowledge, all that is true of the person (place) in these belief worlds should be taken to be true in the fiction as well.[177]

As Lewis himself admits[178], his theory of fiction is not flawless and cannot provide answers for all the problem cases presented by various fictional texts. In addition to not being able to account for a lying narrator, as was mentioned above, Lewis's theory does not seem to be able to satisfactorily account for the sort of fiction (such as postmodern fiction) which plays with contradictions or incoherencies. – In what sort of worlds could stories such as these be told as known facts, since the possible worlds of modal logic simply cannot include contradictions, incoherencies or gaps? It is interesting to note that, as she is closer to literary theory and further away from strict logical philosophy in her thinking, Marie-Laure Ryan seems to be better able to modify her conception of what the possible worlds of fiction are like and how they should be allowed to differ from the possible worlds of philosophy[179]. Ryan's inclusion of the separate world of the narrator is also a nice addition to the "ontology" of fictional worlds, which seems to make them better suited to the theory of fiction.

Another theorist who has taken Lewis's theory as a starting point for his own theory of fiction is Gregory Currie, who emphasizes in his theory the meaning of the pretense of the author *and* the reader when writing / reading a fictional text, calling it the jointly shared act of

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[176] Lewis, 2004, 126
[177] Lewis, 2004, 126
[178] In his *Philosophical Papers,* 1983, 276-280.
[179] See ch. 3.1.

make-believe[180]. Currie's way of getting around the problems which Lewis's theory leaves unanswered is to (similarly to Ryan) emphasize the role of the "fictional author" (which is the same as Ryan's "implied speaker"[181] and Lewis's "storyteller"[182]) and concluding that what in fact happens as we read fiction, is that we pretend to listen to a fictional author, who tells us a story he/she believes to be true. However, this focus on the narrator makes it possible for the narrator to also leave something out of the story, make errors about the story or even lie about what happened.[183] So Currie is also able to accomplish what Ryan analyzes as the story (or the TAW) actually misrepresenting the way it really was (or the TRW) somehow or another.

With or without the modifications and improvements made to the theory by either Ryan or Currie, Lewis's original theory of fiction does present an interesting and intuitively attractive way of analyzing what fictionality, truth in fiction and referring in fiction might mean. In the following chapter I will apply Lewis's theory to two of Diana Wynne Jones's children's novels (*Charmed Life* and *The Lives of Christopher Chant*), referring to the modifications by Ryan if and when needed. The main question will be to determine whether Lewis's theory "works" in practice, or whether one cannot apply it to actual fictional texts without Ryan's modifications (or whether the applying fails even *with* the appropriate improvements). The novels of Diana Wynne Jones offer an added point of interest since they include a whole possible worlds ontology inside the fictional world, which does at least at first glance seem to be very much in line with Lewis's own nominalist theory of modality – for one thing, all the worlds are equally real and concrete.

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[180] Currie, 1994, 18. Currie is following Kendall Walton in this.
[181] Ryan, 1991, 24-25
[182] Lewis, 2004, 122
[183] Currie, 1994, 75-76, 81, 86

4. Diana Wynne Jones's *Chrestomanci*-series and David Lewis's theory of fiction

The two novels which I have chosen to analyze in the framework of David Lewis's theory of fiction are Diana Wynne Jones's *Charmed Life* (first published in 1977) and *The Lives of Christopher Chant*[184] (first published in 1988). Both novels can be described as children's fantasy (they have quite a lot of magic in them) and both belong to Wynne Jones's *Chrestomanci* series. Both novels also tell their stories about the same world (or, in the case of these particular books, about the same system of worlds) and partly even about the same characters. *Charmed Life* tells the story of Eric (Cat) Chant and his sister Gwendolen Chant, who are orphaned early on in the novel and subsequently adopted by *Chrestomanci* and his family, and taken to live in the *Chrestomanci* castle. The novel is primarily about Cat's slow realization that he has in fact nine lives, is a highly gifted enchanter and is, therefore, destined to become the next *Chrestomanci* himself.

Despite being written eleven years later than *Charmed Life*, the story told in *The Lives of Christopher Chant* is actually about what happened in the story of *Chrestomanci* "at least twenty-five years before the story told in *Charmed Life*"[185]. – The later novel is about the childhood of the person (Christopher Chant) who is the adult *Chrestomanci* in *Charmed Life* and tells the story of how the young Christopher began to realize that he had nine lives and was a highly gifted enchanter, and how he also began slowly to accept the fact that he was destined to become the next *Chrestomanci*[186].

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[184] From now on, I will refer to *Charmed Life* with the abbreviation *CL*, and to *The Lives of Christopher Chant* with the abbreviation *LCC.*
[185] *LCC*, 2000, 5 (author's note)
[186] In the novels, *Chrestomanci* is the title of the person who holds the extremely important Government post of making sure "this world isn't run entirely by witches" (since not all the people in their world are witches, but there

As was mentioned in chapter 3.2. above, according to David Lewis the worlds of a fictional text are the worlds in which the story in question is "told [by the narrator] as known fact"[187] and so in these worlds all the characters of the text have extratextual referents and also the plot is enacted in exactly the same way as it is described in the text. And it seems that neither *Charmed Life* nor *The Lives of Christopher Chant* pose any problems against this claim. For instance, the *teller* of either of the novels does not appear to be intentionally lying at any point, but it becomes clear that the teller is in both cases only giving information that the protagonist (Christopher / Cat) also has access to[188], and the protagonists seem also to be the only ones whose mental states[189] are ever described in the novels. However, the stories are told in the third person, so it does not seem to be either Christopher or Cat themselves who are doing the talking/writing. So the teller would have to be someone (inside the world of the stories) who had heard about the events directly from Christopher / Cat, but not from anyone

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are "ordinary people" as well) and also of making sure "witches don't get out into worlds where there isn't so much magic and play havoc there", as the character named Mr. Saunders explains at the end of *Charmed Life* (2001, 262). The reason why neither Christopher nor Cat ever had any choice in the matter of becoming *Chrestomanci* is that the post always has to belong to an extremely gifted enchanter with nine lives, and people with nine lives happen to be "extremely rare" (*CL,* 2001, 211). In fact, in *The Lives of Christopher Chant,* Gabriel de Witt (who was *Chrestomanci* right before Christopher), tells Christopher at one point that he and Christopher are "the only nine-lifed enchanters in all the Related Worlds" (*LCC,* 2001, 146) and similarly, in *Charmed Life,* Christopher Chant tells Cat and Janet that "[a]part from Cat, the only other person with nine lives that [he knows] of on this world is [he himself]" (*CL,* 2001, 211).

[187] Lewis, 2004, 124

[188] Examples: "In the midst of all this, two ladies called Yolande and Beryl (whom Christopher still could not tell apart) sat themselves down at the typewriters and started to clatter away. 'We may not be sorceresses any longer,' said Beryl (unless she was Yolande), 'but that doesn't stop us [--]" (*LCC,* 2000, 266); "[--] Gwendolen had never said Chrestomanci was an enchanter. She would surely never have dared do all the magic she did if she thought he was. 'I don't believe you,' he [=Cat] said" (*CL,* 2001, 191).

[189] Examples: "Puzzled and uneasy, Cat described how and why he and Gwendolen had come to live [--]" (*CL,* 2001, 126); "He [=Christopher] looked at Flavian, breathing hard and glaring at him. He seemed to have hurt Flavian's feelings badly. He had not thought Flavian had feelings to hurt. And it made it worse somehow that he had *not* meant to make a joke about Tacroy – not when Tacroy had just spent the whole day lying on his behalf. He *liked* Tacroy" (*LCC,* 2000, 239).

else in the stories, and who carefully makes sure that he/she does not give out any information to the reader that has not yet been given to the protagonist as well.

Furthermore, the stories do not seem to include any logical contradictions either, they are in fact quite strictly logical, as will hopefully become apparent during the following sub-chapter on the *ontology* of the universe which the novels describe.

4.1. The worlds of *Chrestomanci*

According to Ruth Ronen, David Lewis's theory of fiction is *segregationist* in the sense that it excludes all of the fictional world from the realm of the actual world (as all of the fiction becomes true only in some other possible worlds).[190] Agreeing with Lewis on this point and emphasizing it quite a bit more than Lewis does (after all, for Lewis[191] fictional worlds still equal logical possible worlds and hence are indeed *alternatives* to the actual world), both Ronen and Marie-Laure Ryan are also of the opinion that fictional worlds should not be taken to any extent as alternatives to the actual world in the same way as the possible worlds of modal logic are, but that they are in fact logically completely autonomous from the actual world.[192] As was already mentioned[193], for Ronen and Ryan, then, fictional worlds are not to be taken to describe what could happen or could have happened in the actual world, but what "did occur and what could have occurred in fiction"[194], as Ronen puts it.

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[190] Ronen, 1994, 33 (See also ch. 3.2.)
[191] See ch. 3.2.
[192] Ronen, 1994, 50; Ryan, 1991, 21
[193] See ch. 3.1.
[194] Ronen, 1994, 9

Based on Lewis, Ryan has provided quite a sophisticated analysis of how a fictional universe is put together, and she argues that "[s]ince a text projects a complete universe [--], two domains of transworld relations should be distinguished"[195]. First of all, there is naturally the "transuniverse domain" of the relations which link the textual actual world (TAW) of the fictional text to the actual world (AW) that we ourselves inhabit, but there is also the "intrauniverse domain" of the relations which link the TAW of a text to "its own alternatives" (i.e. its textual alternative possible worlds, or TAPWs).[196] It is these various TAPWs, then, which constitute the other ways things in the fiction might go / have gone, and also the fictional characters' various belief-worlds, their wish-worlds and so on[197], whereas the relations linking the TAW to the AW "determine the degree of resemblance between the textual system and our own system of reality"[198].

In the case of the two novels by Diana Wynne Jones, however, the basic structure of the TAW and its relations to its various TAPWs becomes quite a bit more complicated than what Ryan talks about in her analysis. In fact, for Ryan the various TAPWs of a fictional text seem to consist primarily of the "mental constructs formed by the inhabitants of TAW"[199], since these are usually the only alternative ways things in the fiction might go which are described in a fictional text. Ryan is able to provide one example of a fictional world which consists of more than one textual actual world, though, and this is the world of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.[200] Carroll's novel is indeed quite similar to the novels of Diana Wynne Jones

[195] Ryan, 1991, 32
[196] Ryan, 1991, 32
[197] Ryan, 1991, *vii*, 111
[198] Ryan, 1991, 32
[199] Ryan, 1991, *vii*
[200] Ryan, 1991, 42

(especially *The Lives of Christopher Chant*), since in both *Wonderland* and *The Lives of Christopher Chant* there occurs what Ryan names an "internal gesture of recentering" as in *Wonderland* Alice's "dream-world momentarily takes the place of an actual world"[201] and also in *The Lives of Christopher Chant* there is a considerable amount of hopping from one actual world to another. (Not so much in *Charmed Life*, though, where the other worlds are talked about and even visited, but the reader is never taken to another world, since Cat remains throughout the novel in his own actual world.) So in both *Charmed Life* and *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, in addition to the mental worlds of the characters, there is also an entire ontology of equally real and concrete worlds which have been divided and sub-divided into a main series of 12, according to the ways they relate to each other[202] (although the dividing and classifying is far from complete[203], and as Mr Saunders notes in *Charmed life*, "a satisfactory classification has not yet been found"[204]).

As Christopher's tutor Flavian explains to Christopher in *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, there are twelve separate series of worlds that make up what are known as the Related Worlds (these are the best known of all the worlds), and all of these twelve series, except Series 11

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[201] Ryan, 1991, 42

[202] "Cat learnt that a lot was known about other worlds. Numbers had been visited. Those which were best known had been divided into sets, called series, according to the events in history which were the same in them" (*CL,* 2001, 166-167). See also *LCC,* 2000, 151-152.

[203] The common level of knowledge of the number of the worlds seems to have been pretty bad especially before Christopher's time as *Chrestomanci*, as shown in the following conversation between Tacroy and the young Christopher: "'How many are there after nine?' [Christopher asked] 'Ours is twelve,' said Tacroy. 'Then they go down to One, along the other way. Don't ask me why they go back to front. It's traditional.' Christopher frowned over this. There were a great many more valleys than that in The Place Between, all arranged higgledy-piggledy, too, not in any neat way that made you count up to twelve. But he supposed there must be some way in which Tacroy knew best – or uncle Ralph did" (*LCC,* 2000, 39-40).

[204] *CL,* 2001, 166-167

(which consists of just the one world), consist of usually nine subworlds.[205] As to how these

worlds came into being, Flavian gives Christopher the following explanation:

> All the worlds were probably one world to begin with – and then something happened back in prehistory which could have ended in two contradictory ways. Let's say a continent blew up. Or it didn't blow up. The two things couldn't both be true at once in the same world, so that world became two worlds, side by side but quite separate, one with that continent and one without. And so on, until there were twelve.[206]

Flavian also explains how the nine worlds of one and the same Series came into being:

> Take Series Seven, which is a mountain Series. In prehistory, the earth's crust must have buckled many more times than it did here. Or Series Five, where all the land became islands, none of them larger than France[207]. Now these are the same right across the Series, but the course of history in each world is different. It's history that makes the differences.[208]

To put it in another way, the initial geography of a world is the same in a given Series, but the

respective world histories differ from one another[209]. The different histories of two worlds in

the same Series are compared to each other especially in *Charmed Life*, where poor Janet gets

sucked (by Gwendolen)[210] into world XIIA[211] (which is the actual world for all the rest of the

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[205] *LCC,* 2000, 152

[206] *LCC,* 2000, 152

[207] All the references in these novels to places, events and people which can also be found in the *actual* world will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.2. below.

[208] *LCC,* 2000, 152

[209] Another thing which seems to remain the same all across a series is the *religion* (religions?) of the series. For example, in world XIIA people still go to church and read the Bible (*LCC,* 2000, 138, *CL,* 2001, 103). Moreover, after visiting a world in Series Ten on several occasions and finding out that there people worship a female divinity named Asheth, Christopher goes with Tacroy to another world in the same series, and even though that world seems strikingly dissimilar to the previously visited world in the series, yet Christopher "knew it was still Series Ten when the man waiting with an iron cart full of little kegs said, 'Praise Asheth! I thought you were never coming!'" (*LCC,* 2000, 108-109).

[210] In Gwendolen's letter to her double: "*I know there must be Gwendolens in a lot of worlds but not how many. One of you will come here when I go because when I move it will make an empty space that will suck you in. Do not grieve however if your parents still live. Some other Gwendolen will move into your place and pretend to be you because we are all so clever*" (*CL,* 2001, 130-131).

[211] *LCC,* 2000, 152

main characters in the novels) from world XIIB – the one which is right next to XIIA in Series

Twelve[212].

The equal reality and concreteness of all the various worlds of the universe described in

the novels naturally brings to mind Lewis's nominalist theory of the worlds of modality (see ch.

2.2.). Moreover, the initial feeling of similarity is indeed made even stronger whenever the talk

of the characters turns to the various versions of the same individuals (of whom Gwendolen &

Janet have already been mentioned) who are living their separate lives inside these worlds: "It

was very uncommon for people not to have at least one exact double in a world of the same

series – usually people had a whole string of doubles, all along the set."[213] And, as Tacroy tells

Christopher, the very reason why certain unusual people (such as Christopher and Cat) are born

with nine lives instead of the usual one is that "all the doubles [they] might have had in the

[nine] other worlds in Twelve never get born for some reason"[214]. To complicate matters a little

more, in *Charmed Life* there is an instance where Mr Saunders mentions having doubles outside

his own Series as well[215], but what this could mean is never explained more thoroughly in either

of the novels, so I too cannot do more than mention it briefly and leave it at that.

With this much similarity between the two, it seems that the ontology of the universe

inside Wynne Jones's two novels can easily be compared with the ontology of the possible

worlds of modality as David Lewis analyzes them. And it is Lewis's article "Counterparts or

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[212] See for example *CL,* 2001, 125-130, 147-149. The comparing of these two worlds to one another will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4.2. below.
[213] *CL,* 2001, 166
[214] *LCC,* 2000, 285. What Tacroy says here is actually not entirely accurate, since we learn from Janet (Gwendolen's double) in *Charmed Life* that one of Cat's doubles "died when he was born" (*CL,* 2001, 200). So it seems that all the doubles of a nine-lifed enchanter would have either to have been stillborn or not born at all.
[215] "'But what about doubles outside a series?' Mr Saunders said. 'I have at least one double in Series III, and I suspect the existence of another in –'" (at which point he is interrupted) (*CL,* 2001, 166).

Double Lives" which proves to be particularly helpful when comparing the two ontologies to

one another:

> I distinguish *branching* from *divergence*. In branching, worlds are like Siamese
> twins. There is one initial spatio-temporal segment; it is continued by two
> different futures – different both numerically and qualitatively – and so there
> are two overlapping worlds. One world consists of the initial segment plus one of
> its futures; the other world consists of the identical initial segment plus the
> other future.[216]

Now, it seems to be precisely by this kind of *branching* that the worlds of the *Chrestomanci*

novels came about. If, according to Flavian, all the worlds really were "one world to begin

with"[217] and started to divide in prehistory according to the various possible movements of the

continents, it really cannot be by anything other than branching. Furthermore, Flavian also tells

Christopher that in their own Series (Series Twelve), their own world "which [they] call World A,

is oriented on magic – which is normal for most worlds"[218]. And he continues:

> But the next world, World B, split off in the fourteenth Century and turned to
> science and machinery. The world beyond that, World C, split off in Roman times
> and became divided into large empires. And it went on like that up to nine.
> There are usually nine to a Series.[219]

So it seems that even since prehistory, the worlds have been branching from time to

time. However, in the case of most of the Series in the Related Worlds, this seems to have

happened only these nine times, of which the "splits" in the 14th century and in "Roman times"

in their own Series are given as examples. But it is nowhere in the novels explained why it was

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[216] Lewis, 2001, 201
[217] *LCC,* 2000, 152
[218] *LCC,* 2000, 152
[219] *LCC,* 2000, 152-153

precisely these twelve and then nine times that their own world branched (and not some other

times), nor is it explained why the branching seems to happen so very rarely in history. As to

how the ontology of the novels (with the branching of worlds) relates to Lewis's own theory of

the ontology of the possible worlds of modality then, let us go back to his article "Counterparts

or Double Lives":

> In divergence, on the other hand, there is no overlap. Two worlds have two
> duplicate initial segments, not one that they share in common. I, and the world I
> am part of, have only one future. There are other worlds that diverge from ours.
> These worlds have initial segments exactly like that of our world up to the
> present, but the later parts of these worlds differ from the later parts of ours. [--]
> Not I, but only some very good counterparts of me, inhabit these other worlds. I
> reject genuine branching in favour of divergence. [220]

According to Lewis, then, no two worlds can ever overlap, but both are completely separate

from (no matter how similar they happen to be to) one another. So it becomes quite clear from

this that Lewis would not accept Flavian's account of how the worlds of modality came about,

and at this point, then, the applying of Lewis's analysis of the ontological nature of possible

worlds to the ontology of the worlds of Wynne Jones's novels falls apart. While the worlds of

the novels branch, the worlds of Lewis's theory diverge, and so the two ontologies are in truth

not all that like each other after all.

However, despite the aforementioned way the ontologies of Wynne Jones's novels and

Lewis's theory differ from one another, the so-called *worldboundness* of the inhabitants of the

worlds seems still to be a similarity between the worlds of the novels and the possible worlds of

David Lewis. Since according to the possible worlds ontology of the novels there are only these

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[220] Lewis, 2001, 201

quite few different ways things can actually go in the world, there does not seem to be much room for modal freedom[221] in the worlds. In other words, every individual (at least the ordinary one who cannot travel from world to world) really seems to be confined to the world which they happened to be born into. – People merely have their doubles in the other worlds, and these doubles actually seem strikingly similar to the counterparts that people have in Lewis's theory,[222] except for the fact that some of the doubles can force all the others to switch places (worlds) with one another.[223]

Even though it seems unlikely that Lewis could ever accept in his theory the type of travelling from world to world that takes place in the novels, this travelling of some of the characters is nevertheless accomplished in a strictly logical way which does not seem to pose any violations of our usual logical laws. For instance, usually in the novels people with just one life cannot travel from world to world except *in spirit[224]* – their bodies are left behind, so they are not, strictly speaking, in two worlds at once and so do not even violate Lewis's postulate number two[225]. And when the nine-lifed Christopher appears to be able to travel in the flesh, it is only because he can leave one of his lives behind in his own bed and take the rest (so most of who he is) with him as he travels from one world to the next[226]. However, even Christopher is

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[221] Of course, the more gifted enchanters and sorceresses in the novels seem able to bend and break these modal restrictions quite a bit by traveling (in spirit or even in the flesh) to other worlds as they please. See, for example, *LCC*, 2000, 36; *CL,* 2001, 130. – However, I must add that this kind of traveling between worlds has no longer anything to do with the possible worlds of modal logic.

[222] See ch. 2.2. above.

[223] *CL,* 2001, 130

[224] "'[--] I'm only here in spirit, while you seem to be actually here in the flesh,' Tacroy said. 'Back in London, my valuable body is lying on a sofa in a deep trance, tucked up in blankets and warmed by stone hot-water bottles, while a beautiful and agreeable young lady plays tunes to me on her harp'" (*LCC,* 2000, 36).

[225] $\forall x \forall y \forall z$ (Ixy & Ixz $\rightarrow$ y = z): Nothing is in two worlds (see ch. 2.2.).

[226] "'I've been thinking of you and wondering how you manage to keep coming here from another world. Isn't it difficult?' [the Goddess asked] 'No, it's easy,' said Christopher. 'Or it is for me. I think it's because I've got several

still not in two places at once, since his lives actually seem to be numerically different from one another – they can even be surgically removed from his body and placed inside another container.[227] – A similar removing of lives also happens to the other nine-lifed enchanter in the making, Cat, by his sister Gwendolen, while Cat still has no idea of what it is she keeps doing to him:

> "He [=Cat] doesn't know [how many lives he has]," Gwendolen said impatiently. "I had to use quite a few. He lost one being born and another being drowned. And I used one to put him in the book of matches. [--] Then that toad tied up in silver there [=*Chrestomanci*] wouldn't give me magic lessons and took my witchcraft away, so I had to fetch another of Cat's lives in the night and make it send me to my nice new world. He was awfully disobliging about it, but he did it. And that was the end of that life. Oh, I nearly forgot! I put his fourth life into that violin he kept playing, to turn it into a cat – Fiddle – remember, Mr Nostrum?"[228]

So, based on the extract above, when they are removed from one another, the different lives of the same person do not even seem to know anything about each others' whereabouts or doings – they are completely separate, as if they were counterparts that just happened to reside in the same body for a while, with only one of them[229] at a time even fully awake.

However, as the nine-lifed Cat and Christopher are the exceptions, when Gwendolen, with just her one life, runs away into another world, something else happens – one of her

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lives. What I think I do is leave one of them behind in bed and set the other ones loose to wander'" (*LCC,* 2000, 199).

[227] "As Gabriel worked his fingers into the gloves, he said, 'This is the severe step I warned you of after your fire. I intend to remove your ninth life from you without harming either it or you. Afterwards I shall put it in the castle safe, under nine charms that only I can unlock. Since you will then only be able to have that life by coming to me and asking me to unlock those nine charms, this might induce you to be more careful with the two lives you will have left'" (*LCC,* 2000, 216-217).

[228] *CL,* 2001, 243

[229] It should be noted, however, that at the end of *Charmed Life,* as people are chasing Fiddle the cat, who is of course one of Cat's lives, every now and then Cat does indeed have "an odd feeling that he was Fiddle himself – Fiddle furious and frightened, lashing out and scratching a huge fat witch in a flower hat" (*CL,* 2001, 246). So there seems to be some connection between the two lives after all. – But then, Cat is a highly gifted enchanter and as such, not at all a normal case.

doubles, Janet (from World XIIB), gets sucked into Gwendolen's world (XIIA) and in fact all the

eight counterparts of Gwendolen jump to the world right next to theirs. (Gwendolen apparently

goes to world XIII – which is the ninth world in Series Twelve, and pushes all the other girls one

world back.)[230] Which again sounds strictly logical, of course there could not be two

counterparts of the same person in one world, so when one of them violently breaks into a

world which already has one of her counterparts there, the previous one has to make room and

jump to the next world.[231]

Being bound to a single world naturally also brings with it a strong sense of determinism

in one's life – things for you could not be anything but what they are. For instance in Lewis's

theory, things are only different for some counterparts of yours, but these people are not

strictly speaking you yourself.[232] And in Jones's novels there is also a strong sense of just this

kind of determinism, as if people really felt the oppressing sparsity of the instances that their

world really does branch into two equally real scenarios, so to speak.[233] Otherwise they cannot

do but what they do and everyone's future is already settled[234]. In fact, in his "Counterparts or

Double Lives" David Lewis links the determinism in the diverging-worlds ontology that he

supports just to the way we usually speak of *the* future. For, according to Lewis, the "trouble

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[230] *CL,* 2001, 130, 260

[231] Otherwise this event would violate Lewis's postulate number five: $\forall x \forall y \forall z$ (Ixy & Izy & Cxz $\rightarrow$ x = z): Nothing is a counterpart of anything else in its world (see ch. 2.2.).

[232] See ch. 2.2. above.

[233] But then, how would it feel to be in a world just as it branched into two? So there may be a hint of a logical contradiction here in the TAW of the novels after all.

[234] There are several instances, in which different characters point out that they feel they are trapped in a predetermined world, for example in the following outburst of the Goddess: "'People only want either of us for what *use* we are to them!' she sobbed. 'You for your nine lives and me for my Goddess attributes. And both of us are caught and stuck and *trapped* in a life with a future all planned out by someone else – like a long, long tunnel with no way *out*!'" (*LCC*, 2000, 178. Italics in the original). And in both of the novels people also want to know their future and, for instance, ask a Goddess for a portent or go to a diviner, and the prophecies are accurate as well. See, for example, *LCC,* 2000, 128-129, 211; *CL*, 2001, 130, 230.

with branching exactly is that it conflicts with our ordinary presupposition that we have a single future"[235], and even if having a single future brings with it determinism about the future, at least it avoids the nonsensical notion that when we genuinely have several futures (as in the case of branching worlds) we both have and do not have certain things in our future. – And if it will be both ways in any case, there is no sense in our wondering which way it will be. On the other hand, if it will be just the one way, there is indeed sense in wondering which one this particular (predetermined) way will be.[236] In the novels, then, in the case of the worlds of Series Twelve, for instance, the people who were alive in the 14th century, when one of the nine splits occurred, would logically have had as their futures both the world which "turned to science and machinery"[237] and the one in which enchanters and such like took over.

To sum up, the ontology of the worlds in the *Chrestomanci* novels seems to be a sort of mixture of branching worlds and nevertheless predetermined lives and futures for people, since the branching occurs so rarely that not many generations live through such an occasion. So usually the inhabitants and their doubles in these worlds lead their lives under quite deterministic laws.[238] It should be noted, however, that Lewis makes a point in his article "Counterparts or Double Lives" about *not* rejecting "the very possibility that a world branches"[239]. In fact, he states that he merely feels that "[r]espect for common sense gives us reason to reject any theory that says that we ourselves are involved in branching"[240]. From this one can only deduct that Lewis would have no problem in accepting that some possible world

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[235] Lewis, 2001, 202
[236] Lewis, 2001, 202-203
[237] *LCC,* 2000, 152
[238] Perhaps Christopher and the Goddess would not make such a fuss about their own predetermined fates if they realized that it was the same for all the people in all the worlds.
[239] Lewis, 2001, 204
[240] Lewis, 2001, 204

could indeed branch (within itself that is, but this could not hold for the entire system of possible worlds – as it does within the novels), and so it seems that there is still nothing in the fictional universe of Wynne Jones's novels which would make it impossible for Lewis's theory to account for it, at least not when this universe is taken as a separate system of modality, i.e. as a system of worlds *within one possible world*. – Which is, after all, precisely the way in which Marie-Laure Ryan, for instance, regards the nature of all fictional worlds.[241]

In the following sub-chapter I will concentrate on analyzing the way in which various things which are also found in our (the readers') *actual* world are referred to in the novels, and how this referring can be analyzed in the context of the theories of fiction by Lewis and Ryan. After all, both Lewis and Ryan seem to devote quite a lot of their time to explaining what it is to refer to actual entities inside a fictional text, and how this differs from referring to fictional entities.

4.2. The actual world as World XIIB

As has already been discussed[242], the question of what *referring* in fiction might mean and how referring to actual entities differs from referring to fictional entities has received quite a lot of attention from philosophers and literary theorists alike ever since John Searle's article "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse" was first published in 1975. As has been noted, Searle made indeed a distinction between fictional and nonfictional statements which can occur inside one and the same fictional text, but according to Marie-Laure Ryan this kind of distinction led to

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[241] Ryan, 1991, 32. See also ch. 3.1.
[242] See ch. 3 above.

problems which could easily be solved with using the concept of possible worlds instead.[243] For

the distinction between statements about *actual* events, people and places and statements

about *fictional* events, people and places, for Searle, resulted in the former being taken to refer

to their appropriate referents in the actual world, whereas the latter had to be taken not to

refer to anything.[244] However, according to Ryan, in the possible worlds theory of fiction which

she put forth, once the reader took the initial step into what Ryan called the *textual reference*

world of the fictional text, there ceased to be any "logical difference between speech acts

referring to [fictional people] and speech acts referring to Napoleon", for example.[245]

The way in which David Lewis, on the other hand, tackled the problem of how referring

to actual entities might differ from referring to fictional entities, was of course to introduce the

concept of the *worlds of the stories* (i.e. the worlds in which the story is told as known fact) and

in which all the entities (whether fictional or actual in our own world) had their respective

referents (so were all actual) and so in this way (and quite similarly to Ryan's analysis) there

was no longer any logical difference between them.[246] Lewis then proceeded to take into

account the one crucial difference that there still was between actual and fictional entities,

which was the fact that in the case of actual entities the reader (and the storyteller) usually

knew something about the entity in question even before reading (telling) the fictional story.

Lewis analyzed this type of background information as the *collective belief worlds* of the text,

meaning that these were the worlds in which all that was common knowledge in the

community (culture) of origin of a given fictional text existed as truths. It was these worlds,

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[243] Ryan, 1991, 65
[244] See ch 3. above.
[245] Ryan, 1991, 65
[246] See ch. 3.2. above.

then, which determined what the prevalent beliefs in the background of a given text were and which were usually implicitly included in the text as well.[247] These were also the worlds which made it possible to analyze in detail what the nature of referring to actual, historical people and places inside fiction was – if the person (or place) could be taken to be part of a given culture's common knowledge, all that was true of the person (place) in these belief worlds (meaning, all that was commonly regarded as being *actually true* of him/her/it) was to be taken to be true in the fiction as well.[248] – Unless, of course, it was explicitly stated otherwise in the text.

Now, in both *The Lives of Christopher Chant* and *Charmed Life* there are numerous references to entities which can be found in our actual world as well. For example, quite a lot of place names are the same as in the actual world, such as London, Florence, Venice, Europe (in *Charmed Life*[249]), Covent Garden, Surrey, Cambridge and even one of Lewis's favourite examples, Baker Street[250] (in *The Lives of Christopher Chant*[251]). And there seems to be no reason why these should not be regarded (in the spirit of Lewis's theory and also of Ryan's principle of minimal departure[252]) as being as similar as possible to their counterparts in the actual world. However, there is a further twist to how the actual world of the reader seems to be asked to be viewed in the novels, since it is quite strongly implied in both (especially in *Charmed Life*) that it is the world which is known as World XIIB (the one where Janet comes from) that functions as the realistic description of our own actual world, and to which then the

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[247] Lewis, 2004, 126
[248] Lewis, 2004, 126
[249] *CL,* 2001, 18, 47, 83
[250] Gabriel de Witt to Tacroy: "'When you left the Castle in order to infiltrate the Wraith organisation, the Government agreed to pay you a good salary and to provide comfortable lodgings in Baker Street'" (*LCC,* 2000, 223). However, the Baker Street which Lewis talks about in his "Truth in Fiction" is naturally the one in the Sherlock Holmes stories. See ch. 3.2. above.
[251] *LCC,* 2000, 104, 107, 120, 223
[252] See ch. 3.2. above.

TAW of the novels (i.e. World XIIA, along with all the rest of the worlds) should be viewed as a

genuine modal alternative to. Christopher only goes to World XIIB once, and his brief visit is

described as follows:

> Probably it was World B, but he only stayed there half a minute. When he got to
> the end of the valley it was raining, pouring – souping down steadily sideways.
> Christopher found himself in a city full of rushing machines, speeding all round
> him on wheels that hissed on the wet black road.[253] A loud noise made him look
> round just in time to see a huge red machine charging down on him out of the
> white curtain of rain. He saw a number on it and the words TUFNELL PARK, and
> sheets of water flew over him as he got frantically out of its way. Christopher
> escaped up the valley again, soaking wet. World B was the worst Anywhere [sic]
> he had ever been in.[254]

Furthermore, when trying to get school-related books for his friend the Goddess, Christopher

comes across some fairly interesting books in the Castle library:

> It was a long row of fat books by someone called Angela Brazil[255]. Most of them
> had *School* in the title. Christopher knew at a glance they were just right for the
> Goddess. He took three and spread the others out. Each of them was labelled
> *Rare Book: Imported from World XIIB*, which made Christopher hope that they
> might just be valuable enough to pay for Throgmorten at last.[256]

Once again it seems that both Lewis and Ryan make it possible for the reader to regard the

Angela Brazil of the novel (and of World XIIB therein) as exactly the same Angela Brazil that

existed in the actual world of the reader. In fact, it even seems like quite a gratuitous departure

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[253] It should be noted that in World XIIA people still mainly use horse carriages (see for instance *LCC,* 2000, 47-48 and *CL*, 2001, 148).
[254] *LCC,* 2000, 165
[255] Angela Brazil (1868-1947) was indeed a writer in the actual world as well, and the titles of her novels include, for instance, *For the Sake of the School, Loyal to the School, The Little Green School, The Luckiest Girl in the School* and *The School in the Forest* (Oxford Biography Online).
[256] *LCC,* 2000, 171

from actuality[257] – and even a hindrance to our successful understanding of this particular instance in the novel – to assume that she is *some other* Angela Brazil.

The various differences between worlds XIIA and XIIB are discussed in some more detail by Janet and Cat in *Charmed Life*:

> "Don't you have cars at all?" Janet asked. "Everyone has cars in my world." "Rich people do," said Cat. "Chrestomanci sent his to meet us off the train." "And you have electric light," said Janet. "But everything else is old-fashioned compared with my world. I suppose people get what they want by witchcraft. Do you have factories, or long-playing records, or high-rise blocks, or television, or aeroplanes at all?" "I don't know what aeroplanes are," said Cat. He had no idea what most of the other things were either, and he was bored with this talk.[258]

Even more differences between the two worlds became obvious as Janet (pretending to be Gwendolen) has to attend classes at the Castle school with the rest of the children:

> Janet, as he [=Cat] rather suspected, knew a lot, about a lot of things. But it all applied to her own world. About the only subject she would have been safe in was simple arithmetic. And Mr Saunders chose that morning to give her a History test. Cat, as he scratched away left-handed at an English essay, could see the panic growing on Janet's face. "What do you mean, Henry V?" barked Mr Saunders. "Richard II[259] was on the throne until long after Agincourt. What was his greatest magical achievement?" "Defeating the French," Janet guessed. Mr Saunders looked so exasperated that she babbled, "Well, I think it was. He hampered the French with iron underwear, and the English wore wool, so they didn't stick in the mud, and probably their longbows were enchanted too. That would account for them not missing." "Who," said Mr Saunders, "do you imagine won the battle of Agincourt?" "The English," said Janet. This of course was true for her world, but the panic-stricken look on her face as she said it

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[257] See ch. 3.2.

[258] *CL,* 2001, 148-149

[259] Since the actual Richard II lived 1377-1399, this would suggest that the split between XIIA and XIIB would truly have had to have happened some time before 1399. (Note that Flavian also explained to Christopher in *LCC* [p. 152] that the split between the worlds happened "in the 14th century".)

suggested that she suspected the opposite was true in this world. Which of course it was.[260]

However, no matter how similar to (or even exactly alike) our own actual world this "World XIIB" sounds like, there is a whole host of reasons why the two cannot be equalled to one another. First of all, such equalling would suggest that our own world "was involved in branching"[261], which is not acceptable in Lewis's theory (or according to common sense, either). The ontology of the worlds in the novels is such that it could never apply to our own system of modality, even if we were realists about possible worlds (as Lewis is). And another reason is that, as Ryan points out in her own theory, no matter how similar to the actual world a writer of fiction tries to make his/her fictional world, this equalling can never be a total success, since the TRW will always differ from the AW at the very least "in that the intent and act of producing a fiction is a fact of AW but not of TRW"[262]. And in the case of the two novels by Jones, in both of them there is also some mixing of the supposed actual world with fictional beings, as in *The Lives of Christopher Chant* Christopher visits World XIIB[263] and in *Charmed Life* the fictional Janet is supposed to exist there, then suddenly supposed to cease to exist there and after that, the counterpart named Romillia is supposed to take her place there[264]. This kind of mixing in itself naturally makes it impossible for World XIIB to be equalled to our own actual world, and the same kind of mixing (fictional beings in actual surroundings) naturally also provides the

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[260] *CL,* 2001, 140-141
[261] Lewis, 2001, 204
[262] Ryan, 1991, 33. In postmodern fiction, though, writers have tried to play with this logical rule a bit. For instance in John Barth's short story entitled "Life-Story" (in his *Lost in the Funhouse*) the act of writing seems to be included in the story in quite a peculiar way, even in this opening sentence: "Without discarding what he'd already written he began his story afresh in a somewhat different manner" (Barth, 1988, 116).
[263] *LCC,* 2000, 165
[264] *CL,* 2001, 259

reason why the more usual examples of fictional texts can never be taken to be about the actual world. In fact, it seems correct to argue, as Ryan[265] does, that at the very moment a world is introduced to us inside a fictional text, this world can never be taken to equal our own actual world, no matter how similar to the latter it may seem.

So in the context of Lewis's theory of fiction, as similar to our own actual world as it may be, World XIIB is still nothing more than one of the subworlds in some other possible world (where the stories of the novels are told as known fact) which happens to branch within itself and form an entire sub-system of modality within itself. And in the context of Ryan's theory, the fictional world of the novels is nothing more than the usual kind of universe that any fictional text projects, with all the various TAPWs[266] in operation, albeit in a somewhat original manner, as the TAPWs include quite a lot of worlds even besides the characters' mental worlds. This universe is otherwise quite similar to our own world (especially in the case of one of its subworlds, World XIIB), but with quite extensive departures and a fair amount of fantasy as well.

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[265] According to Ryan, the equalling of the fictional world to the actual world "would imply that the sender of the text recenters the system of reality around a world which is on all points similar to AW. This seems not only pointless but also impossible" (Ryan, 1991, 33).
[266] Ryan, 1991, *vii*

5. Conclusions

The main question that I wanted to examine in this study was whether David Lewis's possible

worlds theory of fiction could be successfully applied to two fictional novels by Diana Wynne

Jones, and also whether the ontology of the possible worlds in Lewis's theory could account for

the ontology of the system of possible worlds inside Jones's two novels. In the process of

finding out whether the possible worlds of modality could be equalled to the fictional worlds of

literary theory in general, the theories of Ruth Ronen and Marie-Laure Ryan proved to be

particularly helpful. For, as Ronen argued[267], the conclusion was that logical notions such as

nonexistence and incompleteness truly could not be automatically transferred (without any

modification) from the philosophical context of what is actual and possible, to the context of

fictional worlds, since the possible worlds of modal logic used in this way would in fact provide

nothing but an "unsatisfactory explanation for fictional entities and their mode of being"[268]. So

it seems that the fundamental differences between the possible worlds of logic and those of

fiction (as discussed in chapter 3.1.) need to be taken into consideration, if any kind of analogy

is to be drawn and maintained.

However, with the appropriate modifications which Ronen and Ryan put forth, it seems

that possible worlds can indeed be quite useful in analyzing the nature of fictional worlds.

Perhaps the most important distinction that should be kept in mind is that even though for

David Lewis fictional worlds still equalled logical possible worlds and hence were seen as

genuine *alternatives* to the actual world, in the later theories of both Ronen and Ryan fictional

worlds were not supposed to be taken to any extent as alternatives to the actual world in the

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[267] See ch. 3.1.
[268] Ronen, 1994, 143

same way as the possible worlds of modal logic were, but they were in fact logically completely autonomous from the actual world.[269] To quote Ronen once again[270] in this, fictional worlds truly are not to be taken to describe what could happen or could have happened in the actual world, but what "did occur and what could have occurred in fiction"[271].

To sum up, even if Lewis's theory has its shortcomings for instance in dealing with a lying narrator or a text that includes contradictions or incoherencies, the novels of Diana Wynne Jones do not seem to pose any problems of that kind to the theory, and so in the context of these novels the theory works quite well and is indeed able to account for everything in the novels. – Even the (at first glance problematic) ontology of *branching worlds*, as was seen in chapter 4.1. above. And when one adds the modifications made by Marie-Laure Ryan, there does not seem to be anything in any work of fiction that the theory could not account for.

Furthermore, with the question of what *referring in fiction* might be taken to mean, Lewis's theory offers quite a clever way of making the references to fictional entities equal to those to actual entities – by making all the entities equally actual in another possible world. And in Ryan's further development of this strategy, what started out as a genuine alternative to our actual world becomes an autonomous fictional universe with again no logical difference in the references to entities that are actual only in the TAW and to those which happen to be also actual in our own actual world (in addition to the TAW). So everything which was still a problem or at least an awkwardness in the earlier theory of John Searle for instance, is perfectly well accounted for and poses no problem at all in the theories of David Lewis and Marie-Laure Ryan.

[269] Ronen, 1994, 50; Ryan, 1991, 21
[270] See ch. 3.1.
[271] Ronen, 1994, 9

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