October 30, 1973

I hope the title of these lectures gives some indication of their content. A while ago, in another place, I gave some lectures called "Naming and Necessity." I wish here to continue with some of the topics I discussed there, in order to tie up some loose ends. I don't know to what extent I can presuppose the contents of those lectures; perhaps I will get a clearer picture of that when the audience has jelled, so to speak. But I wish especially to discuss two areas which I didn't have the time and space to cover in *N&N*, and to raise a couple of topics related to them. One of them, which is perhaps the more important of the two, is the whole topic of how naming relates to existence, in particular the problem of vacuous names and reference to what does not exist, of fictional entities, of existential statements, and the like. The other area which I intend to cover (I say "intend" advisedly because the work on the first topic may expand or contract) is that of speaker's reference and

2. Remember that when the present lectures were given, in 1973, *N&N* was only recently published. I suppose that now the reader has a considerable advantage over the audience then, though some must have been familiar with the earlier work, or I wouldn't have been invited to give the John Locke Lectures.
3. These topics are discussed more briefly in "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities" (*Kripke 1980b*), a precursor to these lectures given earlier in 1973 at a conference at the University of Connecticut.
semantic reference. By "speaker's reference" I mean reference as used in such a phrase as 'Jones was referring to Smith when he said "that fat old hypocrite"'—this is reference by a speaker. The other related notion of semantic reference would be used in such a statement as: 'the phrase "the author of Waverley" refers in English to Sir Walter Scott.' This pair of topics is suggested by Donnellan (1966). Now let me start out with the first of these major topics.

No problem has seemed to represent a more perplexing philosophical conundrum than that of the use of names which have no reference—or, not to beg the question against Meinong (though I will beg it perhaps practically from here on out), names which appear to have no reference. We can also use names for imaginary entities. The fact that we can do so has been taken to be an almost conclusive argument in favor of one philosophical view as opposed to another. Mill, as I suppose most of us know, held that proper names had denotation but no connotation: when you use a name its semantic function consists simply in referring to an object, and nothing else. It does not refer to the object by giving it properties which pick the object out as a descriptive phrase does. If you call a man 'the man who corrupted Hadleyburg, you have referred to him by virtue of describing him as the (unique) man who corrupted Hadleyburg.' But if you simply call him 'Sam,' you have simply called him that and have attributed no properties to him. The contrary view was taken both by Frege and by Russell as applied to what are ordinarily called 'proper names' in English. According to Frege and Russell, a proper name doesn't differ from a definite description in this respect. It too assigns certain properties that uniquely characterize the object, and the object is picked out as the object which has these properties. It isn't just simply a term without any descriptive content, or connotation, as Mill thought.

One of the things that seemed to be crucial in favor of the view of Frege and Russell here, as opposed to that of Mill, was the problem of existence. For we can surely, for example, raise the question whether Moses really existed, and even, if you like (though we would probably be wrong in this case in doing so), come up with a negative answer. But if someone concludes that Moses never existed, she surely is not using this name with the semantic function simply of referring to an object, and then denying of that object that it has the property of existence. On the contrary, she is simply saying that there is no such object. If Mill were right, and the whole function of naming were simply reference, it seems hard to see how she could make such a statement or raise such a question. Once she used the name, she would be presupposing that there was an object to be referred to; she couldn't in addition ask about 'it' whether it existed or not. Much less could she conclude that 'it' doesn't really exist, that there is no such thing.

This in particular has been held to be conclusive against any kind of Millian paradigm. Also, of course, we can use proper names—as when we raise the question of whether Moses existed—without knowing whether they have reference or not. Moreover, we can make definite statements such as: 'If Moses really existed, he was not born in the Renaissance, since a book about him was written

4. The material on this distinction was subsequently published in Kripke (1977). The matter is also discussed briefly in N&N (1972: 380: 25, note 3) and the accompanying text.

5. I had in mind the story by Mark Twain, actually titled "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg." When I gave these lectures (and also in N&N; see Kripke 1972: 380: 18), I replaced 'that' by 'who, not remembering the original title. I still think that 'who is what accords with natural English idiom, and do not know why Mark Twain used 'that' in the title. So I have decided to leave who in the text.

6. 'Moses (Napoleon, etc.) no longer exists' strikes me as true, and expressing the fact that the individual referred to is dead, no longer with us, even though he once was. To my ear, the simple 'Moses (Napoleon, etc.) does not exist' is not the best way to express the matter. In my own discussions, I always imagine the question as being whether the entity ever existed.
before the Renaissance—somewhat before.' And we can also, of course, use names without thinking that they have reference at all. This is what goes on in fictional discourse when we talk about Sherlock Holmes, refer to Sherlock Holmes, and the like.

Frege and Russell gave a fairly uniform and common solution to this problem, which I suppose you all know. They in good part arrived at it independently. They had two doctrines (or maybe four?). First, they held that existence is not a first-level but a second-level concept (this is to use Frege’s terminology as opposed to Russell’s). By this they meant that although we meaningfully use the word ‘exists’ to say of a property or predicate that it is or is not instantiated, as when we say that there are tigers, and that there are no round squares—that tigers exist, but round squares do not—the word ‘exists’ here expresses, so to speak, a property of properties, whether they are instantiated or not: it holds of a property if it is instantiated. This is what Frege calls a ‘second-level’ concept. To deny that it is a first-level concept is to deny that there is a meaningful existence predicate that can apply to objects or particulars. One cannot, according to Frege and Russell, say of an object that it exists or not because, so they argued, everything exists: how can one then divide up the objects in the world into those which exist and those which don’t?

Russell talks about this in the lectures “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism.” In the discussion following the fifth lecture, someone asks the following:

Q: Is there any word you would substitute for ‘existence’ which would give existence to individuals? Are you applying the word ‘existence’ to two ideas, or do you deny that there are two ideas?

(Russell 1988a: 211)

That is, are there two ideas, one, existence as applied to concepts where the concept is instantiated, and the other, existence as applied to individuals in statements that would say of an individual that it exists? Russell answers:

Mr. Russell: No, there is not an idea that will apply to individuals. As regards the actual things there are in the world, there is nothing at all that you can say about them that in any way corresponds to this notion of existence. It is a sheer mistake to say that there is anything analogous to existence that you can say about them. […] There is no sort of point in a predicate which could not conceivably be false. I mean, it is perfectly clear that, if there were such a thing as this existence of individuals that we talk of, it would be absolutely impossible for it not to apply, and that is the characteristic of a mistake.

(1988a: 211)

Second, however, it seems that in ordinary language we clearly do talk as if we applied existence to individuals. For example,

9. As I said, Frege, too, held that existence is not a predicate of individuals. He thought that the fundamental error in the ontological argument was that it treated existence as a first level concept. (See Frege 1997b: 146.)

Another relevant quotation is this: ‘I do not want to say it is false to say about an object what is said here about a concept. I want to say it is impossible, senseless, to do so. The sentence ‘There is a man whose name is Julius Caesar’ has a sense, but here again we have a concept, as the indefinite article shows’ (Frege 1997d: 184). (In the second sentence, according to Frege’s usual practice, one ought to put ‘Julius Caesar’ in quotation marks, but I am quoting from the translation given.)
someone can raise the question whether Napoleon really existed. The
nineteenth-century logician Richard Whately raised this question in his book *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Buonaparte* (Whately 1832), and concluded that Napoleon undoubtedly didn’t exist because, as Hume argued, you shouldn’t accept a story if it is too fantastic—it is more reasonable to suppose that people are lying (and, in this case, the story is quite fantastic). The idea which applies here has of course been applied to the Gospels, too. (This was Hume’s intent, though he more explicitly discusses the Pentateuch.) Anyway, one can raise the question whether Napoleon really ever existed, and in this case give an affirmative answer, though maybe some historian would come up with a negative one sometimes. (Whately did, or at least pretended to do so, and it is at any rate logically conceivable that he was right.) But we are at least raising the question of existence of an individual.

Frege and Russell, again as I suppose most of you know, answered this question by their analysis of proper names. To each proper name, they held, there corresponds a criterion or property picking out which individual is supposed to be named by the name. So, in the case of Napoleon, such a criterion might be ‘being the leader of the forces that were defeated at Waterloo,’ or various other things, fantastic things that we have heard about Napoleon. (Actually that one was not so fantastic.) The name will mean: the thing which satisfies the criterion in question. One can affirm the existence of Napoleon, meaning by it that the concept ‘being defeated at the Battle of Waterloo’ is uniquely instantiated—that is, that the concept ‘being the one and only person who was the leader of the defeated forces’ is instantiated.

So, according to Frege and Russell, the solution is as follows: with each proper name one associates some predicate that is supposed to be uniquely instantiated. If in fact there is a thing A which uniquely instantiates the property in question, then one says that Napoleon exists, or, in the general case, that A exists; if not, one says that A does not exist. But one is never really affirming of an object that it exists or not; one is instead affirming or denying of a predicate that it is uniquely instantiated. And this seems to correspond, of course, with the facts. What would a historian be doing if he asked whether Napoleon really existed? He wouldn’t first find Napoleon and then look at him very carefully to see whether or not he really existed. Rather, he would see whether there was any one person who answers to the properties in the stories we have heard about Napoleon, or, at any rate, most, or “enough,” of them.

This general doctrine presumably applies to the particular case where what we have before us may be a literary or mythological work, or a historical report, but we don’t know which. Say we have the story about Moses: what do we mean when we ask whether Moses really existed? We are asking whether there is any person who has the properties—or at least enough of them—given in the story. In a famous passage in *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein, talking about this very case, says that we mean various things when we say that Moses did not exist, namely that the Israelites did not have a single leader when they withdrew from Egypt, or that their leader was not called ‘Moses,’ or that there could not have been anyone who accomplished all that the Bible relates of Moses, and so on. “I shall perhaps say,” Wittgenstein says, “by ‘Moses’ I understand the man who did what the Bible relates of Moses, or at any rate, a good deal of it” (1953: §79). Here Wittgenstein is following Frege and Russell. He does want to modify them in one respect, in allowing that there is a cluster of properties picking the person out,
rather than just a single one, and that this cluster will have rough edges: that is, there will be indeterminate cases in which it is impossible to say whether we would conclude that Moses existed or not. But the divergence here is unimportant for my purposes. Many moderns (by ‘moderns’ I mean people who are alive today) have followed Wittgenstein in thinking that this would be one respect in which Frege and Russell need modification.

Thus, according to the orthodox doctrine, when we have, let’s say, a literary work before us, or a history that may be historical reports or may be fiction, we know nothing else about a person apparently named in such a story other than what occurs in this story. Then—and this is the paradigm which has been generally accepted—to affirm the existence of, say, Sherlock Holmes, is to say that there is a unique person satisfying the properties attributed to Holmes in the story. To deny Holmes’s existence is to say that there isn’t any such person, or any such unique person, anyway (maybe there are ten of them, and we couldn’t say which one was Holmes). This then is the orthodox doctrine.

One should pay tribute to the power of the Frege-Russell analysis here. Actually, in the case of existence the analysis is even more powerful in Russell’s version, I would say, than in Frege’s.

That is, it is more unified, because Russell in general analyses out descriptions and names in favor of predicates, and the analysis comes out in precisely the same way in the case of the existence statements as in any other case. In the Frege version, the existence statements would have to be treated a bit specially, as when one analyses the question of whether Moses really existed or not.

The power of the Frege-Russell doctrine, which explains why it has so uniformly held the field in philosophy since then—perhaps until recently—has been the way it gives clear and uniform solutions to a variety of problems, of which this was one. It similarly analyses puzzles about identity statements, about reference in intensional contexts, and about just how names and singular terms can get a reference at all. It analyses them in a singularly uniform way which seems to treat every different case successfully. Any theory which tries to give an alternative account has got to show what is wrong with this beautiful picture, and put forward an alternative and equally powerful picture in its place. This is what I am trying to make a start at doing in Nê-N.

In those lectures I presented a view that differs from that of Frege and Russell, and is closer, at any rate, to that of Mill in various respects. To say everything in the famous Talmudic phrase—I don’t know if any of you have ever heard of it—‘standing on one foot,’ the views discussed in Nê-N differ from that of Frege and Russell, particularly in the following ways.

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11. That is, in 1973. I could have mentioned Scripture (1948), as I did in Nê-N.
12. Although I take the Frege-Russell doctrine to analyse names in fiction according to the same paradigm that Frege used for ‘Aristotle’, the name of a historical figure—that is as the unique person (or other object) fulfilling the story—I now find it hard to find an explicit statement in Frege about the senses of names in fiction. For example, he says ‘Although the tale of William Tell is a legend and not history and the name ‘William Tell’ is a mock proper name, we cannot deny it a sense’ (Frege 1977: 230). But he says little as to what this sense is. Similarly, talking about The Odyssey, he says that ‘the name ‘Nausicaa’ which probably does not stand for [what are] or name anything, ... behaves as if it names a girl, and it is thus assured of a sense. And for fiction the sense is enough’ (Frege 1977: 176). But once again he does not specify what this sense is. The view that I have called the Frege-Russell doctrine on fiction does appear to me definitely to be held by Alaniz Church, a more recent Fregean.
13. However, this way of putting things glosses over a great deal, since it is well-known that Frege and Russell had very different views of definite descriptions. Frege applied the sense-reference distinction to definite descriptions, and held that the reference changes in intensional contexts, whereas Russell (as we would see him today) analyses definite descriptions as complex quantifiers (actually defined in terms of the universal quantifier and truth-functions and identity), and gives a different solution to the problem of intensional contexts. (For some of my own discussion of these topics see Krupke 2005 and 2008.) In Nê-N, I constantly refer to the Frege-Russell doctrine, mostly having in mind what they would hold in common about (ordinary) proper names of historical figures, or names of fictional characters, etc. In the present lectures, I have especially in mind how both would deny that existence is a predicate of particulars.
First, I held that proper names, as opposed to most definite descriptions, are rigid. According to Frege and Russell, a proper name means a definite description. For example, the name 'Moses' means, let's say, 'the man who led the Israelites out of Egypt.' If that is what the name 'Moses' means, and if we wished to talk about a situation in which some other man had led the Israelites out of Egypt, then in using the name 'Moses' in counterfactual situations, we would be using it to refer to the man who in those situations would have led the Israelites out of Egypt, and this would not be Moses himself. Thus, according to Frege and Russell, if their analysis were correct, such a name as 'Moses' would be non-rigid. It would refer to different people in different situations. On the contrary, I argued, when we use the name 'Moses' it always means or refers to the man, the particular man, who—I suppose they are right about the rest—in fact led the Israelites out of Egypt. Actually I reject their view on this question too, but let us accept it for a moment. So 'Moses' is to mean 'the man who in fact led the Israelites out of Egypt.' We use the name 'Moses' rigidly to refer to a certain man, and we use it to refer to that man even when talking about counterfactual situations in which the man didn't lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

This is one respect in which I think that Frege and Russell were wrong, and Mill would have been right: Frege and Russell would have affirmed that such a statement as 'Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt'—or, in Wittgenstein's modification, 'Moses, if he existed, did many of the things the Bible relates of him'—is analytic and therefore presumably a necessary truth, whereas it seems to me to be plainly a contingent truth. Some other man than Moses might have done all these things, and Moses might have done none of them. In that case it would have been false; it would not have been the case. So, far from being analytic, it is not true in all possible worlds.

Second, I held that even in determining reference in the actual world—and this is a different issue—we do not generally use properties that we believe to be satisfied by the objects to pick them out. Rather, some picture like this is to be held: someone initially 'baptizes' the object, picking out the object perhaps by pointing to it, or perhaps by its properties, or perhaps by some other device. Then—I follow Mill here—speakers wish only to preserve the reference of the name, and as the name is passed from link to link, if one person wishes to use it in the same way as she heard it, she uses it with the same reference as the speaker from whom she heard it. The name gets spread throughout the community, and down through history, with only the reference preserved. All sorts of myths may arise about the object which are not really true of it. It may even become the case that the great bulk, or perhaps all of what is believed uniquely to identify the object, in fact fails to apply to it. I tried to substantiate this by a battery of counterexamples to the usual view. I don't think that I will go into them at this point, but I might review them later.

One question which I didn't treat was the very question of existence, and I wish to fill this lacuna here—the questions are in fact very elaborate. But before I do so let me say a little bit more about what Russell in particular held about empty names and existence. Russell, unlike Frege (here I take back everything I said about him before!), agreed with Mill that proper names have denotation but not connotation. Where I spoke of the Frege-Russell view as opposed to that of Mill, I perhaps should have spoken of the Mill-Russell view as opposed to that of Frege. I was therefore slightly inaccurate. Why did I speak in that way? Because when you come up with anything that anyone would ordinarily call a name, Russell (even this is somewhat inaccurate) would agree with Frege about it as against Mill. Russell would hold that such a name does have a sense given by a descriptive phrase. (He really held that there is no
such thing as Fregean sense, but let's leave that out; the divergence isn't important here. See note 13.) But then, since he officially agrees with Mill, he holds that the things that we ordinarily call 'names' aren't really names, and that we have to leave it to analysis to discover what the genuine names really are.

One of the criteria that are demanded by this argument to apply to names—genuine names of genuine objects—is that they have to name objects such that we can't even meaningfully raise the question about whether they exist. In particular, it cannot be subject even to Cartesian doubt whether such objects exist. Now Russell thought you could have an inventory of which objects could be named, which are, in his own terminology, objects of acquaintance. The most plausible candidates for this were one's own immediate sense-data; for one's immediate sense-data are things which are not subject to Cartesian doubt—by definition. If I have a sense-datum of a yellow speck in front of me, I can be in no doubt, or no Cartesian doubt, as to whether it really exists. In that case there is no point in raising the question whether it exists, and the question whether this—this yellow speck in front of me—exists, can simply be dismissed as meaningless, if one wants, because there is no issue to be raised.

Russell also thought at various times that there were other objects of acquaintance, genuinely nameable. One example, when he believed in such an entity, might be the Cartesian self.15

It would seem that once a sense-datum or visual impression has disappeared, it won't have the status of a nameable object, because one may, as Russell was well-known for arguing, mistrust one's memory about whether such a thing really existed after all. Once again in the lectures on logical atomism Russell emphasizes his belief. In the question period, he is asked:

**Question:** If the proper name of a thing, a "this," varies from instant to instant, how is it possible to make any argument?

(1988a: 186)

The point is that if Russell is right, the objects which can be genuinely named are very fleeting. Once you move your head, things are not the same, and according to this theory one has altogether a new set of objects to be named 'Sam,' 'Harry,' and so on. So how can you

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14 Some years ago, long after the present lecture was delivered, Gideon Mildon emphasized to me that for Russell sense-data were something physical. See the first sections of The Relation of Sense-data to Physics (Russell 1914a). Since this paper was written reasonably close to the lectures I am quoting, it is probable that Russell has not changed his mind. Exactly what type of physical entities he has in mind in this paper is rather obscure to me, but it does not seem to affect the main discussion in the present lecture. They are indubitable objects of acquaintance, and are relatively fleeting.

15 In the paper "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," published originally in 1910, Russell speaks of genuine proper names, that is, words which do not assign a property to an object, but merely and solely name it, and claims that "there are only two words which are strictly proper names of particulars, namely, 'I' and 'this" (Russell 1910: 163). However, in a footnote added in 1914, he says: "I should now exclude 'I' from proper names in a strict sense, and retain only 'this" (see page 162, note 2). The category of genuine proper names, naming objects of acquaintance, now seems to be that of "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism." In general, his picture of genuine objects of acquaintance seems to have narrowed progressively since he introduced it in "On Denoting," though it was rather narrow there already.
make a deductive argument? For if the premise contains names, the conclusion will contain these very same names, and no longer be a part of the language when you are through. He replies:

_Mr. Russell:_ You can keep "this" going for about a minute or two. I made that dot [he had then put a dot on the blackboard] and talked about it for some little time. I mean it varies often. If you argue quickly, you can get some little way before it is finished. I think things last for a finite time, a matter of some seconds or minutes or whatever it may happen to be.

_Question:_ You do not think that air is acting on that and changing it?

_Mr. Russell:_ It does not matter about that if it does not alter its appearance enough for you to have a different sense-datum.

(1988a: 180)

It is only the sense-datum that matters—however, you would better be careful to hold still. I could not do it. This picture may seem rather fantastic; nevertheless I have not found in subsequent philosophy an adequate reply to the arguments that moved Russell to such an answer.

Wittgenstein took the argument up in the _Tractatus_. He held that nameable objects (he called them simply "objects," whereas Russell called them "particulars") had to be part of the necessary furniture of the world, things that could not have failed to exist. Those things which have only contingent existence are not really objects—they are combinations of genuine objects. By this I mean not that the real objects are molecules, or something like that, but that when we say that this table might not have existed, of course we mean that the molecules comprising it might not have been formed in the combination that appears as this table. They might have had

another arrangement. And that is what we mean whenever we talk about contingent existence. But the genuine objects are part of the necessary furniture of the world—they are the same in all possible worlds. And this too seems to follow from the arguments. Because if the only function of naming is reference, and we can't even raise the question of existence, then we can't say that an object might not have existed; we can't speak of the contingency of the fact that it does—to do this would be to make singular existence statements meaningful—as Moore pointed out (see next lecture).

Wittgenstein is following Frege and Russell—and here, I think, especially Russell. It is interesting to note that the two requirements that they place on the existence of these objects—one, indubitability, and the other, the Wittgensteinian requirement that they have necessary existence—are incompatible. For it would seem, at least to me, that nothing more plainly has contingent existence than one's own immediate sense-data, one's own immediate visual impressions. Right now I am having a bunch of them, but I might not have had these sense-data at all. How could I have avoided having them? Well, if the attendance at my lectures had been different, if I myself had not turned up, if I had come in and decided to talk with a blindfold. In any one of these cases I would have had not a single one of these sense-data. Or I could have been shot dead before the lectures began, or I might never have been

16. Obviously we shouldn't be misled by my example of the molecular theory, since this example depends on empirical considerations about physics. But the point is that any question of contingent existence must really be a question of whether objects do or do not relate to each other in various ways. The genuine simple objects are the same in all possible worlds.

17. In the beginning of the lectures "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," Russell states that he is expounding ideas that he got from Wittgenstein. Some ideas may indeed reflect his influence. The _Tractatus_ had not been written yet (or at least, not seen by Russell), and Russell was in no contact with Wittgenstein, as he states. Probably the ideas in these lectures should really be attributed to Russell himself. As is well-known, when Russell did write an introduction to the _Tractatus_, Wittgenstein strongly disapproved of it and thought it superficial and a misunderstanding of his ideas.
born. So these entities certainly have contingent existence; if any entity has necessary existence, it isn’t these.\footnote{I must admit that in the argument I give here I was certainly not aware of Russell’s notion of ‘sensibilia’ as set out in Russell (1917b). According to that paper, though sensibilia become sense-data only in virtue of a person getting acquainted with them, they exist anyway, as what would have been seen, etc. from a certain perspective. Thus the fact that someone’s sense-data would not exist if he were not looking a certain way is only analogous to the fact that no man can be a husband without getting married. I find this doctrine of the real existence of sensibilia rather confusing, but since they are supposed to be physical objects, I would take it that they do not have necessary existence. None of this is mentioned in Russell (1988a).} Nor is the self a necessary existent either, for I might never have been born.

Something must have gone wrong here, for the requirements that are placed on the objects have led these two philosophers working together to conclusions which are incompatible and contradictory: it is essentially the same argument, first applied in the epistemological sphere, and second applied in, so to speak, the metaphysical sphere, which leads to the two conclusions.

It has been a bit of a question, in the exegesis of the Tractatus, whether Wittgenstein’s objects are in fact Russellian objects, whether they are in fact one’s own immediate perceptions, or at least include them. I don’t want to go into an exegetical question, and perhaps couldn’t conclusively argue this, but it would seem that if Wittgenstein had his wits about him on this matter, the objects couldn’t be one’s own immediate sense-data, because such objects would fail to satisfy the most elementary requirements of the theory. Therefore, unless he simply failed to notice this, he didn’t believe that these were the objects. Of course, people can fail to notice things, so perhaps the argument isn’t conclusive.

Anyway, people did seem to fail to notice that one and the same argument leads to two conclusions which are quite incompatible. I know of no object that I could mention, at least among the relevant particulars, which would satisfy the criterion both of necessary existence and of indubitable existence. (Well, perhaps the statement should be rather stronger: I know for certain of no object which is a particular and which satisfies just the single criterion of necessary existence.)\footnote{Well, some have argued that the Deity is a particular that necessarily exists.} Since there are these incompatible conclusions something must be wrong with the analysis; but that is not to say what.

It is interesting to notice this case because very often the idea of epistemological certainty or a priority (really these two epistemological notions are not to be identified with each other) has been identified with that of necessity. I inveigh against this very strongly in Né-N. In particular, I say that, even if it were indubitable that Moses really existed, that he must actually have done most of the things related of him in the Bible, that is not to say that the statement that, if Moses existed, he did these things, is a necessary truth, for in counterfactual situations it would have been false. Anyway, in this case the divergence is so great that one is led to sweepingly incompatible conclusions.

Now I want to say something else about and against Russell at this point. He introduces his very special category of logically proper names in order to solve a philosophical problem: since one cannot meaningfully ask of a particular whether it exists—for if one is referring to a particular, then of course it exists—Russell wishes to create a special category of particulars which can be named and which indubitably exist. This is supposed to eliminate the need to analyze negative existential statements for this special case. Negative existential statements arise in particular when we discuss fiction. We say that Sherlock Holmes, Dick Tracy (is he known in this country?), Jupiter, and Pegasus do not really exist. They occur in fiction. Russell doesn’t want to have a realm of fictional existence, so he analyses these statements as: ‘no unique thing satisfies the
conditions laid down in the story. In the case of genuine names for immediate sense-data this problem is not supposed to arise, and that is why he creates this category. Well, I think he failed to avoid the problem for this very case, even if one agrees with him that the existence of one's own immediate sense-data is not subject to Cartesian doubt, so that the question of existence cannot meaningfully be raised.

Ordinarily, when I tell a story I fill it with names of people, but in this case let us suppose that I am a Russellian who likes to use Russellian logically proper names. I am still writing a story, so I write it about immediate sense-data of mine; only in this case they can be imaginary. So I do not see a yellow speck over there, but I will write a story for myself, for my own use, in which I suppose that I do, and give it the proper name 'Matilda.' This, in the context of the story, would represent me as fulfilling a perfectly legitimate Russellian process of naming. Now, commenting to myself about this story, pointing out that it is only a story, I say 'Well, of course Matilda doesn't really exist.' Because it is only a story, I am not having a sense-datum of a yellow speck in front of me, though I then go on to tell the story about what is happening to me as a result of seeing this yellow speck. The story could contain even a name of an actual sense-datum;¹⁰ say 'Aloysius,' and I would say that Aloysius really does exist. Just because something occurs in the story, it does not mean that the entity so named is fictional. There are fictional stories, for example, about Napoleon—a real person—and in commenting on those stories one says that Napoleon really existed, but his faithful dog Fido in the story did not—he is from the fictional part. So here too I could say: 'So, Aloysius really exists; Matilda does not.'

¹⁰: Here and throughout this discussion, I am writing as if the Russellian notion of sense-datum were clear and uncontroversial. But I do not commit myself to this.

This is a perfectly good comment to make, and it uses in the one case a genuine Russellian proper name, 'Aloysius,' and in the other case a putative such name, 'Matilda,' which is being asserted here to be only fictional. It does so for precisely the same reasons as would apply if one were naming people, and precisely the same questions of analysis or proper account should arise.

One should not say here that 'Matilda' and 'Aloysius' are not really names; 'Aloysius' was stipulated to be such a genuine name—it is being contrasted here with 'Matilda'—and 'Matilda' too is a putative genuine Russellian proper name, but in fact it names nothing. One should not say that either of these are really definite descriptions. For one thing this would give a false account of the facts as I just stated them. For another, what definite descriptions could they be? Well, 'Aloysius' isn't supposed to be a definite description; I introduced it as the reverse. Perhaps then one could argue that 'Matilda' turns out really to be a definite description? Well, what definite description is it?

One candidate might be, 'the yellow speck I see in front of me'—say that it is really used as short for that. But that can't be right—the story might not assert at all that there is only one yellow speck in front of me. I'd be luckier perhaps if that were so, but it might say that there was a bunch of them, and pick one of them out, calling it 'Matilda.' So the name could not refer to the unique yellow speck I see in front of me, nor could 'Matilda' be analyzed as being the thing I call "Matilda," because I may elsewhere in other contexts genuinely use 'Matilda' as the name of an ordinary woman, though I do not so use it here. Nor could it be used as equivalent to 'the yellow speck I call "Matilda."' Perhaps at some earlier time I called some yellow speck 'Matilda,' or perhaps even at the present time there is some yellow speck (even now in front of me) which I call 'Matilda.' But in the story I am not using 'Matilda' to refer to that
speck: I am simply, because of my fondness for it, naming my fictional object after the speck. The same thing would more plausibly work with people. Of course, one can try to get around this with 'the thing that I call 'Matilda' in this story,' where this very sentence occurs in the story, but one had better not go to that—at least in a hurry. The problems with such self-reference are well-known, and presumably one should not leap into them here.

At any rate, even aside from such arguments, I think such an account obviously falsifies the facts. What is going on in a story such as this one is that one is romancing to oneself that one is giving a genuine Russellian proper name to an object. Russell thinks he has solved the problem because, if he is right, the objects he names have indubitable existence. That gets rid of the problem of a possible mistake, that is, of thinking that there is a Napoleon when there isn't really one, but it does not get rid of the possibility of empty names and, hence, of negative existentials. It does not get rid of the possibility of fictional discourse containing such putative names. Therefore it does not get rid of negative existential statements, for though the answer to the question 'Does Matilda exist?' will be trivial—it will be obvious to the man who tells the story—still it will be negative. Matilda does not really exist; Aloysius does. One can draw this contrast, and so Russell does not avoid the problem.\(^{21}\)

This particular argument against Russell seems to me to show something important. For the problem of singular negative existentials—of being able to say that A does not exist (say, that Moses does not exist)—was supposed to be an argument which was conclusive against any Millian type of paradigm, any paradigm which made the existence of a referent essential to the semantic function of naming. 'What about fiction?' it is immediately said. There are names which just don't refer.\(^{22}\)

Just the contrary seems to be the case. The existence of fiction is a powerful argument for absolutely nothing: it cannot settle the question as between the Russellian theory and the Millian theory, nor can it settle the question between Mill's theory and any other theory. Take a semantic theory which says that the essential semantic properties of names are such-and-such—for example, the Millian theory, where having a referent is an essential feature of a name, or Russell's, where this is true for genuine proper names, but, as I said before, not for what we ordinarily call 'proper names.'\(^{23}\) Suppose some criterion or other is given: now, what do you say about a fictional case? Doesn't that represent a big problem which can adjudicate between one theory and another? Isn't it a problem for Mill's theory, where there cannot be names with no referent, as appears to be the case in fiction? Well, no, I think it does not, because when one writes a work of fiction, it is part of the pretense of that fiction that the criteria for naming, whatever they are, are satisfied. I use the name 'Harry' in a work of fiction; I generally presuppose as part of that work of fiction, just as I am pretending various other things, that the criteria of naming, whatever they are—Millian or Russellian or what have you—are satisfied. That is part of the pretense of this work of fiction. Far from it being the case that a theory of the

\(^{21}\) This can supplement the argument against Russell used by Moore (1948b: 128), which points to the fact that one's own immediate sense data have contingent existence. See Lecture II, note a and accompanying text, for discussion.

\(^{22}\) Although some might argue that there are senses in which they really do, I will deal with that later.

\(^{23}\) It is also worth noting that Mill would have had to supplement his account by some theory or criterion of how the reference of a name is determined, for the answer cannot simply be just that we point—indeed, it's pretty clear that it's not generally the case that reference is determined that way. In my own case, where I held a view which is at any rate closer to Mill than that of his successors, if not entirely that of Mill, the criterion is given by a historical chain in which the reference is transmitted from link to link. But the answer really doesn't need to be dealt with here. (It is one of the main points of N & N.)
Reference and Existence

reference of names ought to make special provision for the possibility of such works of fiction, it can forget about this case, and then simply remark that, in a work of fiction, it is part of the pretense of that work of fiction that these criteria are satisfied. Perhaps what makes it a work of fiction is that these criteria are not in fact satisfied (and usually other things in the story), but the pretense is just that: a pretense.

So I will call this ‘The Pretense Principle,’ to give it a name. If this is so, it would apply to any theory of naming whatsoever. And in particular, as I just pointed out, it applies even to Russell’s notion of logically proper names. What is one doing in the fictional case? One is pretending as part of the work of fiction that one has a Russellian logically proper name here, and Russell does not avoid this possibility either. So, far from this being a crucial test case for theories of naming, it should be a test case for nothing whatsoever.

One can very well say that, as in Mill, it is an essential part of the semantic function of naming that there be a referent. Then, in a work of fiction, one pretends that this essential function is fulfilled. I do therefore—if I go by this principle—have to draw the consequence that, for a follower of Mill, the propositions that occur in a work of fiction would only be pretended propositions, so to speak. For example, if someone says ‘Matilda is bothering me’ in a work of fiction, what proposition is being expressed here? On Russell’s view the proposition would contain as its constituents the thing ‘Matilda,’ and then relational properties, and maybe some other things, which correspond to the phrase ‘bothering me.’ But since there is no such thing as Matilda, there is no such proposition. One is simply pretending that there is. The same would go for the more general—or general-Millian—case, where it is being pretended that a more mundane referent, say a person, really exists, and propositions are being stated about him. Since there is no such person, there are no such propositions. (I will elaborate on this later.)

In the case of pretense in fiction there are some obvious qualifications. First, of course it need not be asserted in the work of fiction that the name used in the work of fiction is the character’s name in the ordinary sense. In Lolita, Nabokov says, in fact, that the names have been changed to protect the innocent. Second, given a work of fiction, it need not in theory follow a correct philosophical theory of reference. Of course the work of fiction may fictionally say that some incorrect theory is the case. But this case is a rare exception probably arising only in theory. Normally a work of fiction will say no such thing, and can be assumed to provide no specific theory of reference.

This Pretense Principle, I think, would apply even if the Frege-Russell analysis were correct, and this shows how wrong the analysis has gone, as given in the orthodox version. Suppose Frege and Russell were right and the essential function of naming (in its ordinary use) is to give a descriptive property of an object, and thereby pick it out. I don’t think it follows, anyway, that their analysis as adapted to the case of fictional works is correct. For remember their analysis. It says that a name in fiction means ‘the thing satisfying the properties stated in the story, or at any rate most of them—the unique thing.’ However, remember that the story is a pretense,

24 I think that many philosophers have observed that fiction is a pretense, and that the names occurring in it are pretenses of being names. However, when I gave the present lectures, I was unaware that Frege appears to be the first author explicitly to note this (see Frege 1907: 259–60). I disagree with Frege on one point. When a proper name of a historical figure appears in a work of fiction, such as that of Napoleon in Tolstoy’s War and Peace, Frege seems to think it does not really stand for Napoleon, whereas I think it does. For a fuller discussion, see the passage from Frege, see Kripke (2010: 58, note 41).

25 For example, in ‘On Denoting,’ Russell says that if we want to analyze sentences about ‘Apollo,’ we look at a classical dictionary and see that the phrase means ‘the sun-god’ (see Russell 1903–1904: 401).
pretending that the conditions for ordinary naming are satisfied. Then, all that should be required is that in the story it is presupposed that there are some properties by which the narrator picks the thing out, but not that these properties are stated in the story, or even, if the properties are stated, that they are given correctly. One can see clearly now what an incorrect account of the facts about fiction the Frege-Russell theory gives, even supposing it is correct in a non-fictional case.

First, it says that the proper name means 'the thing satisfying the properties in the story.' To affirm existence is to affirm that there is a unique thing satisfying the properties in the story. This is radically false. Why the uniqueness? Why should the story say anything that even putatively identifies an object uniquely? It talks about, very fleetingly, a certain tall man, Sam Smith, who accosted the hero on the corner of some street. Now does that mean that only one tall man ever accosted the hero of the story on some street? Or it may say just that Sam Smith is a tall man and that the hero knew him: it says 'If I were a tall man like Sam Smith, I would be such-and-such.' Does that really imply that Sam Smith is the unique tall man, or even the unique tall man about whom the hero ever so mused? It need not even mean that there is a unique tall man called 'Sam Smith' about whom the hero so mused. Perhaps there are several. Still, he was represented as musing about a particular tall man, Sam Smith, on this particular occasion. The story need not even putatively assert uniqueness.

Second, it is held that if there is an object which uniquely satisfies the properties attributed to the object in a story, then it is not a story: the thing really exists, and the account is not fictional at all. But the common practice of authors is just the very reverse. They print at the beginning of their story: 'The names used in this story are fictional, and any resemblance to characters living or dead is purely coincidental.' Suppose a person, believing himself to be possessed of a valid suit for invasion of privacy, sues the author of such a story, and proves in court that he uniquely satisfies the properties mentioned in that story. Then will the judge necessarily rule on behalf of the plaintiff? I think not. Suppose the author can show that he never heard of this man; that he definitely wasn't writing about him; that it was indeed a coincidence, just as he said. Then a reasonable judge would rule against the plaintiff, against Frege, against Russell, and against Wittgenstein, and hold that the author had a valid defense, though this person uniquely fits the story.\(^\text{26}\)

Finally, the other way around, Frege and Russell would claim that if no person fits the story at all, then one can conclude that, say, Sherlock Holmes does not exist. This is radically false. It fails to distinguish between a work of fiction about a historical person, and a work of fiction about a fictional character. Take the Napoleon case that I mentioned before. Suppose, in the year 3000, only one of these fictional stories about Napoleon survives. Can one then conclude that Napoleon never existed, or at least that, as used in this story, the name 'Napoleon' refers to no one? No, one cannot. This story is still a story about a real man, although the only thing to survive in this case is fictional. So I emphasized in Ne\&N that, though the case of Moses is not a counterexample, the case of Jonah in the Bible may be. Some biblical scholars argue, and one can quote them, that though the story about Jonah is entirely fictional, the

\(^{26}\text{When I gave these talks, A. J. Ayer informed me (although he said it didn't affect the philosophical point I was making) that I was not correct in English law (which is very favorable to plaintiffs in libel cases). I mentioned this in the discussion afterwards, and someone remarked that I would be right in American law. Naturally, the greater the 'coincidence' involved (and the larger the corpus), as in the totality of the Sherlock Holmes stories, the more unlikely it is that there should be some unique person who, by some coincidence, matches these stories but has no connection with Conan Doyle. But, however unlikely it may be, it is not impossible.}\)
man Jonah really existed. This was one of the legendary accounts (unfortunately the real historical ones have not survived) about a genuinely existing Hebrew prophet.\footnote{See \textit{NôN} (Kopec: 1972/1980: 87, note 28). But maybe this wasn't the 'scholarly consensus' I thought it was. I have since seen writers others than the one I quote state the contrary. It doesn't matter, since as I said, the view could be true, whether or not there was evidence for it.}

Since I am over time, I will stop here. I should mention that it is in the analysis of this very case that I think the Frege-Russell theory goes even more wrong—in the counterfactual situation. I will deal with that next time, not today as expected.

I have argued (a) that the Frege-Russell theory is not demanded by the existence of fictional works—in fact no particular theory is demanded—and (b) that, as it is stated, it solves the problems that it raises about these works incorrectly. I think that it even incorrectly applies itself to these works: one shouldn't say that one uses the predicates in the story; one should just say that it is part of the pretense of the story that there are such properties that pick the objects out, known to the narrator. Of course, to say these things is not to give a positive and correct account, since we haven't dealt with the problems about the existential statements and so on. And that, of course, will be the next important task.

\footnote{Also, even at the time I gave the present lectures, though maybe I didn't know it then, I could have used Moses instead as an example. The famous biblical scholar Martin Noth thought that Moses was a historical figure, but (contrary to the impression one would get from Wittenstein's discussion) that he had little to do with the exodus from Egypt, or most of the best-known things related about him in the Pentateuchal account. (The true core about him is "guidance into the arable land.")}

Perhaps I should add that since then, I have read authors even more unfavorable to the historicity of the exodus. But these are questions not to be discussed here.
What I promised to talk about in this lecture was the final problem of negative existentials. The thing which has most boggled people, and confuses me still to this day, is how to analyze a singular negative existential statement. The problem becomes more acute rather than less so, on my view. Why do I say that? The original problem is: what can someone mean when he says that Sherlock Holmes does not exist? Is he talking of a definite thing, and saying of it that it doesn’t exist? The reason the problem becomes somewhat more acute on my view is that it has been universally regarded in the literature as unproblematic to make a negative existential statement using a predicate: 'There are no leopards in the Arctic'—this simply asserts the emptiness of a certain predicate. Similarly 'There are no unicorns'—that is absolutely fine (I have seen it given as an example). Not according to me, because what I say is that, just as there is no definite person, Sherlock Holmes, to whom non-existence is being attributed, so there is no definite property, that of being a unicorn, which is being asserted to have empty extension in the statement 'There are no unicorns.' And, of course, part of the resistance one might feel to what I suggested about unicorns is on account of just that. If there isn’t some kind of possible animal which is being asserted not to have instances in the actual world, what does one mean when one says 'There are no unicorns'?

This is a problem. But it shouldn’t lead to resistance to my view of unicorns. For it is surely just as legitimate to say 'There are no bandersnatches.' One might say this to a child who asked to be taken to see a bandersnatch in the zoo after reading the poem in question. But here on almost anyone’s picture, surely not just my own, there is no definite kind of animal called 'the bandersnatch' which is being asserted not to have instances in the actual world. The poet was just making up an animal. The only thing we are told about bandersnatches is that they are 'frumious,' whatever that means. It is also implied that they are dangerous; or should be 'shunned.' Surely no one would think that one can say what kind of animal a bandersnatch would have been had there been bandersnatches, what kind of species is being asserted to be empty when one denies that there are any bandersnatches. Yet one can tell one’s little child that there are no bandersnatches.

So the problem really is just as acute for predicates of a certain kind, those introduced by fictional names of species, as it is for singular terms. But people have concentrated on and worried themselves to death over the case of a singular term, because only there did they have the feeling that the object must exist, so that one can say of it that it doesn’t exist.

Two suggestions immediately come to mind. These suggestions arise out of what I myself have already said. Before presenting them, let me remark that there are, in the case of the singular existential statement, really two very different kinds of cases. They are assimilated in the literature but they are certainly different. First, one may use a genuine name and, truly or falsely, say of the object that it exists. For example, I say 'Napoleon really existed' or 'Napoleon didn’t really exist' (I say that falsely). In this case, as I have emphasized before, contrary to Frege and Russell it seems to me to be clear that one is quite legitimately talking about the object, quite legitimately saying of it that it exists. It is possible that it would not have: Napoleon would not have existed had his parents never met. That does not mean something about the deeds of Napoleon not having been performed, or some other predicate about Napoleon not having been satisfied, had his parents never met. For all I know any famous

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9. Well, a third one does too, namely the view of Frege and Russell, but I take it that I have disposed of that. If I haven’t, I am not going to convince anyone on the other side at this point: and if I have, I already have.
deeds of Napoleon would still have occurred, any predicate in question would have been satisfied, even if his parents had never met, and maybe satisfied better by someone else. This is not what is in question when one says that, though Napoleon existed, he might not have existed. And if someone thinks falsely—as the logician Whately, with tongue in cheek, pretended to do—that Napoleon doesn’t exist, Napoleon himself can quite correctly say to him ‘So you thought that I didn’t exist, did you?’ and send him, perhaps quite correctly, to an appropriate place. ‘Napoleon might not have existed’ is as much a statement about Napoleon as any other that predicates a genuine property of him. There may be some sense in which existence isn’t a predicate, in which one can say that ‘Napoleon exists’ doesn’t attribute a property to Napoleon. After all, you are not attributing a property to Napoleon when you say he exists—you are saying there is such a thing for properties to be attributed to. That in some rather obscure sense seems to me to be true, and it is perhaps what Kant had in mind. But it should not be understood as implying that when one says ‘Napoleon exists’ one isn’t saying something about Napoleon, or isn’t using ‘Napoleon’ as a singular term just as much here as in any other case. On the contrary, there is a fact that there is such a thing as that thing—Napoleon—and there might not have been any such thing.\footnote{See Moore (1959b: 126), discussed in Lecture II.}

Quite different (and this is one of the additional problems which then arises, on my view) is the case where an empty name is used. For one surely is not saying anything, or so it seems at first blush, about Sherlock Holmes when one says (apparently about Sherlock Holmes) that Sherlock Holmes doesn’t exist. And if someone falsely believes that Sherlock Holmes does really exist—that is, the man in the story—there is no possible entity, let alone an actual one, who can come up to that person and say ‘Huh, you thought I existed, did you?’ the way Napoleon could in the other case.

What then is the solution to the problem? It seems that in some sense the analysis of a singular existence statement will depend on whether that statement is true. And this, of course, seems in and of itself to be absolutely intolerable: the analysis of a statement should not depend on its truth-value. Or so at any rate might be our prejudice.\footnote{This is related to what Geach (1962) has called “Buridan’s Law,” but it is simpler and even less apt to be at all questionable.} Nevertheless, one shouldn’t ignore the facts here, and the facts seem to me to be as I have stated.

Quite analogous remarks could be made, to some extent, about predicates, except that here there are negative existentials with empty predicates which are unproblematic (unlike the unicorn and bandersnatch cases). For example, one might truly, I suppose, say that there are no giraffes in the Arctic. ‘Giraffe in the Arctic Circle’ is an ordinary predicate which happens to have an empty extension. That case is fine. But ‘There are no unicorns’ raises problems analogous to the bandersnatch case, in my view.

Two things I said come to mind. One of them is to use the apparatus of fictional characters which I developed before. Why not say that when one says ‘Hamlet does not exist’ one is speaking of a fictional character? Perhaps many people might think that that is what I want to say. But it can’t be right, taken straightforwardly, because one isn’t saying of a fictional character that it doesn’t exist. On the contrary, the fictional character does exist. So the fictional character is not something which is being said not to exist. If you say that the fictional character didn’t exist, you would be wrongly assimilating this case to the case of Moloch, where one can say truly, as I did before, there was no such god as Moloch, that Moloch didn’t exist.
That is in contrast with the case of Hamlet, rather than being the same kind of case. If one wishes to talk about the fictional character, one should say that it does exist.

One should bear in mind here that one should not confuse levels of language. Where I said originally that an empty name was just a pretense, as in the case of 'Hamlet,' or a mistake, as in the case of 'Vulcan' (where one thought a name had been properly introduced when it had not), that was one level of language. An extended level of language was set up by the introduction of an ontology of fictional characters, or legendary objects; and this level uses just the same names for them as were originally empty. This happens especially in the case of pretense in fiction. But one shouldn't confuse this level of language with the previous one. One should not say that, when an author is just pretending to refer to a man though she is not, that that pretense was in and of itself naming a fictional character. One should say that she was creating a fictional character.

It is true that because of the extended use of language these levels often get elided. One might say just 'Hamlet is not real: he is merely a fictional character' (which can be analyzed as 'Hamlet is not a real person: he is a fictional person') just as one might say 'This is not a real duck: it is a toy duck.' One can say that with perfect propriety when one is talking about an ordinary object. But one might even say 'Hamlet doesn't exist: Hamlet is merely a fictional character.' Here—though one might well be tempted to make assertions of this kind—one is really mixing kinds of discourse. For after all it isn't the fictional character which does not exist; there is such a fictional character. (Again, contrast the case of Moloch who, on the premises previously mentioned, doesn't exist even in the sense that a mythological god does exist.) In saying 'Hamlet doesn't exist: Hamlet is merely a fictional character' one is really saying, first, that there is no such person as Hamlet—that on that level of language there is no referent for the name. But then, just because there is no referent for the name, this work in front of us is a work of fiction; so therefore (one is saying) there is such a fictional character as Hamlet. There is such a fictional character just because there is no such person, though a name purporting to refer to such a person does occur in a work of fiction.

One might think that the ontology of fictional characters would be of some help—that when one is referring to a fictional character, the denial of existence might be a (somewhat strange) way of saying that the character is only fictional. But on the contrary, 'Hamlet does not exist; Hamlet is only a fictional character,' only illustrates the problem of interpretation. The first half purports to say that something does not exist. But the second half uses 'Hamlet' to refer to something that does actually exist (in virtue of the existence of a certain play). It appears that 'Hamlet' must be construed ambiguously here, even though the second half of the sentence purports to explain the first.12

I am very suspicious of a view that takes the denial of existence to mean 'fictional' or 'not real.' First, when one says 'Suppose Moses had never existed' or 'Suppose Napoleon had never existed,' one doesn't mean by this 'Suppose Moses (Napoleon) had been a mere fictional character.' One doesn't mean that at all. Napoleon couldn't have been a mere fictional character, any more than he could have been a prime number. There might have

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12 Romina Padé has suggested to me that it may be possible to draw an analogy here with cases of the toy-duck fallacy, and use it to account for negative existentials. Statements such as 'Hamlet does not exist, he is only a fictional character,' would be, on this view, a way of saying that Hamlet is not a real person but a real fictional character. Analogously, the toy duck is not a real duck, but it is a real toy duck. One might emphasize this when speaking to a child who is fantasizing about having a real pet duck. (This connects with her remark that when locutions such as 'That's a duck' refer to a toy duck, they may be introducing a fictional context. See Kripke (2010: 346 note 81).)
been a fictional work written about someone who performed just the same exploits as Napoleon; but that doesn’t mean that Napoleon himself would, under such circumstances, have been a mere fictional character.

Second, the additional thing which makes me suspicious of this view (I actually think that the remark about Napoleon is fairly conclusive against it, but here is something which is another initial source of suspicion) is that it just seems to me that if, as I said, the introduction of the ontology of fictional characters is an extended use of language, then singular existential statements (and denials thereof) could have been made even if this extension had not existed. Even if we didn’t have an ontology of fictional characters in our language, one could still say with perfect propriety that there was no such person as Hamlet. One doesn’t need some extra kind of entity, or so it would seem intuitively, just to say that.

Finally, we not only have fictional characters but also fictional fictional characters. In that case, of course, a special signal would have to be given, because one wishes to distinguish real fictional characters from merely fictional fictional characters like Gonzago. One wishes to say that such a fictional character as Hamlet does exist, and such a fictional character as Gonzago does not. So perhaps one first gives a sortal, and then uses ‘exist’ to say whether something is a real member of that sortal. For example, if the sortal is ‘person,’ then on this view one uses ‘exist’ to mean that something is a real person, rather than a fictional one. But the sortal could be ‘fictional person,’ and then one would be contrasting real fictional persons (such as Hamlet) with fictional fictional ones (such as Gonzago). However, this would be a quite misleading use of ‘exist,’ because all such entities could be said to exist in the ordinary sense (assuming both concrete and abstract objects exist). But in this proposal one would be saying what kind of entity they were by speaking of whether they existed or not. And this it seems to me to be prima facie unacceptable.¹³

Even in cases where language is in fact very reluctant to apply the notion of fictional character, we can still say ‘A does not exist.’ I think I have mentioned in the question period the case of Sam Jones and the check, in which I, lying to the restaurant owner, say that Sam Jones will come to pay the check. One might be very reluctant to speak of a fictional character here, if that is all I have said. But the police could very well comment on what I have said by saying ‘Sam Jones doesn’t exist.’

So it seems to me that the singular existential statement should not be analyzed as using a predicate which isn’t really existence, but which divides one kind of entity from another. I emphasize this because some might have taken me to be attempting just such an analysis, given this whole ontology of fictional characters I have recognized.

Another suggestion might be a metalinguistic analysis. After all, when someone says that there are no bandersnatches, doesn’t he mean that the predicate ‘is a bandersnatch’ doesn’t apply to any kind of animal, or something like that—something metalinguistic about the predicate? And if someone says ‘Vulcan doesn’t exist,’ he just means that ‘Vulcan’ is an empty name. So why not analyze these statements metalinguistically?

¹³ Various people have been attracted to the suggestion that while the pretense in fiction is to refer to say, a person, one is really referring to a fictional character (see for example Salmon 1987, 1998, and 2001). And similarly for myth, though here one would have to attribute a false belief as to the referent, as opposed to the real ones. Since on this theory there are no empty fictional or mythological names, there seems to be a consequence of it that even the earliest people knew, implicitly or otherwise, about the ontologies of mythological characters. But that of course seems implausible. Compare this to the case of modern set-theoretic analyses of the natural numbers. Did even Frege wish to claim that his analysis was what we meant all along?
have had a referent. Of course, a book just like the one in question could have had the name ‘Vulcan’ in it, used in a way such that it had a referent; but one might try, in some manner which is not entirely clear to me, though its flavor is clear enough, to say that we won’t count it as that (originally mentioned) use of the name unless, let’s say, the entire history (on my view) was the same; at least, enough of it should be the same for us to be able to say that this hypothetical use goes back to the same kind of referent as the other use, and here it goes back to nothing.

Nevertheless, this kind of metalinguistic analysis, like any other, seems to me to be beset by difficulties. Suppose one runs across either the name ‘Vulcan’ or the name ‘Santa Claus.’ One is an anthropologist, and one sees the name ‘Vulcan’ or ‘Santa Claus’ on a printed page, and one asks ‘Is that a name?’ Someone might answer, ‘No, that name has no referent.’ This is quite different from what one is telling the child, who is now growing up, when one says ‘Look, Santa Claus doesn’t really exist.’ If one is able to tell the child that, the child must have learned something about Santa Claus. He isn’t really just being told that some name, which he may otherwise not understand at all, has no referent, nor even that in a particular use it has no referent. If he comes to believe that Santa Claus does not exist, and expresses this belief afterwards by saying ‘Santa Claus does not exist,’ he is using the name and not mentioning it. If he were merely mentioning it he would be in the same position as the anthropologist. For the anthropologist can certainly learn that the name ‘Santa Claus’ has no referent: that is easy. But the anthropologist may not learn thereby what the child learns—that Santa Claus does not exist. In fact, even though he is growing up, he may still believe in Santa Claus, referring to him by a different name, of course, or even referring to him by the same name but thinking: ‘Oh, well, that kid must be using the term “Santa Claus” differently, since he uses the term “Santa Claus” with no referent.’
Things get even worse if one tries to analyze indirect discourse in this way. Suppose someone says 'The Greeks believed that there was such a divine being as Zeus,' or that 'Zeus existed.' Well, what are we saying that the Greeks believed? On the analysis in question we are saying that the Greeks believed that the name 'Zeus' had a referent. This I suppose is true in this particular case, but it is true only because the Greeks used the same name as we. For all we know, when we say 'The Greeks believed that Zeus existed,' it may be the case that the Greeks either used a different name, or that they didn’t use any name at all. And we are not prejudging this question when we say that the Greeks believed that Zeus existed. Or if we say that such and such an atheistic Greek believed that Zeus didn’t exist, again we don’t mean that this atheistic Greek believed that the name ‘Zeus’ had no referent. He too may not have used the name ‘Zeus,’ or may not have used any name at all.

One can’t even analyze the first statement with safety as “The Greeks believed that some name with the same reference as “Zeus” designated an existing entity.” This actually compounds the problem even more, rather than helping matters. For one has first to give an analysis of the statement ‘Zeus exists,’ and then just report it after the ‘that’ as the content of the Greek’s belief. As in: ‘There is some name with the same reference as “Zeus” and the Greeks believed its referent existed.’ One can’t, so to speak, move this content outside the scope of the belief context. (Besides, does ‘Zeus doesn’t exist’ mean some name with the same reference as ‘Zeus’ has no reference? What could that mean?) So, on this analysis, to say that the Greeks believed that Zeus exists is merely to say that the Greeks believed that some name with the same reference as ‘Zeus’ has a referent. But of course the Greeks, if they had never heard of the name ‘Zeus,’ also didn’t have any belief which can be analyzed as: some name with the same referent as the name ‘Zeus’ has a referent. Once again, they may never have heard of the name ‘Zeus.’

These being the problems, and my general prejudice being against supposing that a metalinguistic analysis is hidden in an ordinary statement, I felt that this approach ought to be dropped. It wouldn’t work, in any case, where one is really using a non-empty name. Even where one is using an empty name, it seems an important objection that the name is being used rather than mentioned.

I have a certain tendency at this point to throw up my hands. Perhaps one shouldn’t try and give an analysis at all. But instead I’ll try and say how, as far as I can guess, this kind of statement got into our discourse. It does seem to me to be a genuine and unsolved problem—perhaps the most difficult in the area.

It is true, of course, that when someone knows who Santa Claus is, then he will believe that Santa Claus doesn’t exist if, and only if, the name ‘Santa Claus’ has no referent. He would say that right off the bat. That is not to say, though, that all he means by ‘Santa Claus doesn’t exist’ is that the name ‘Santa Claus’ has no referent. The latter statement could be understood by someone who has no idea what the name ‘Santa Claus’ is supposed to denote, only that it has no reference (in that sense it is weaker).

Those of you who stayed for the question period after the very first lecture may remember one question which I will now mention again, since anyone who heard what I said then has probably forgotten it. ‘How do I analyze,’ so it might go, ‘“The Greeks believed that Zeus was a mighty god”’? (Here I am reporting on the belief of the Greeks, who thought they were talking about a real god.) Or how do I analyze, if someone, Jones, say, reads a story and mistakenly thinks the characters in it are real, the statement that Jones believes that Sherlock Holmes is a brilliant detective (he mistakenly believes that Holmes is real)? If after all ‘Sherlock Holmes’ is just a
pretended name, then the whole proposition which is supposed to be the content of Jones's belief is only a pretended proposition. Perhaps he merely believes that he has a belief.

One could answer this, actually, using the ontology of fictional characters, by saying that he has mistaken a fictional object for a real one. But one can give the following kind of vague answer which is independent of that, and which is needed, for example, for such cases as ‘The story has it that Sherlock Holmes is a great detective.’ What is it that the story has it that? There is supposed to be no such proposition as that Sherlock Holmes is a great detective which the story has it that. I said of this, not that some metalinguistic analysis should be introduced (any more than in the other cases), but that one should speak of a kind of proposition which is being asserted to exist and to be true. The story has it that there is a true proposition about Sherlock Holmes, namely that he is a great detective. An astronomer who thought that Vulcan was red would believe, first, that there is an object, Vulcan (I guess the one causing the perturbations of Mercury), which he uses the name ‘Vulcan’ to mention; and second, there is a proposition, which I would call a proposition about Vulcan, namely the proposition about Vulcan that it is red.

This is a little obscure to me, and perhaps to you. I want to be careful here, as in the other cases, to be using these names rather than mentioning them. So that in the sentence ‘The astronomer believes that there is a proposition about Vulcan, saying of Vulcan that it is red,’ the phrase ‘about Vulcan’ is a special sort of quasi-intensional use. And I should emphasize that I am going into an area about which I have little confidence, except that I prefer my view of it to anything else.

One can sloppily view the statement in question as metalinguistic, by saying that it means that the astronomer believes that the sentence ‘Vulcan is red’ expresses a true proposition. But that doesn’t seem to me really to express the content of it. It is subject to the same kind of difficulties as the metalinguistic analysis is elsewhere. So: the astronomer believes that there is a true proposition about Vulcan, that it is red. He is wrong, not because the proposition is false but because there is no such true proposition. Nevertheless, first, it is quite plainly correct to call him wrong, in some sense, when he says that Vulcan is red, because he believes wrongly that there is a true proposition which he expresses by the words ‘Vulcan is red.’ Second, one might, though this is somewhat sloppy, have a strong inclination to call this false, or to assimilate it to the other case.

This is more likely in some cases and less so in others. One may, for example, deny that Vulcan is red without even knowing whether there is a Vulcan, just because one knows, say, that a red planet would not fulfill the conditions of the relevant astronomical theory. So either there is no such proposition as that Vulcan is red, or if there is such a proposition it is false. Anyway, there is no true proposition that Vulcan is red. If so, one will say in advance: ‘Well, I don’t know that much about Vulcan, but I know at any rate that Vulcan isn’t red. I don’t even know whether there is such a planet, but it is not a red one.’ One might similarly say, without knowing whether there is such a kind of animal as a bandersnatch, that at any rate there are no bandersnatches in the Arctic, because one has thoroughly explored the Arctic, and one has found that nothing that could conceivably be a bandersnatch is there.

What does one mean when one says that there are no bandersnatches in the Arctic? Not that one knows that there is a proposition that there are bandersnatches in the Arctic, which one is then denying. For if it turns out that this really was a nonsense poem, there aren’t just no bandersnatches in the Arctic, or even no bandersnatches at all: there is no such kind of animal as a bandersnatch. And
we can't say: 'It happens to be true that there are no bandersnatches, though there could have been bandersnatches.' We can't say in what situation there would have been bandersnatches. Nevertheless it is natural, extending our usage, so to speak, to use 'There are no bandersnatches' to say 'There is no true proposition that there are bandersnatches (in the Arctic, or even on the whole earth).'</p>

Similarly one might say, not knowing whether Sherlock Holmes exists or not, 'Whether or not there was a Sherlock Holmes, he isn't one of the people in this room, because the account about him was written long before any one of us had been born.' That is a conclusive enough reason. Here one should, strictly speaking, once again say 'There is no such true proposition as that Sherlock Holmes is in this room,' where I understand the purported name 'Sherlock Holmes' and can therefore refer to this alleged proposition by a 'that' clause.

What happens if one tries to apply the analysis in the case of a singular existential statement? Suppose, instead of saying 'Moses exists' or 'Sherlock Holmes exists,' or denying these, I say the following: 'There is a true proposition that Moses exists' or 'There is no true proposition that Moses exists.' Or 'There is a true proposition that Sherlock Holmes exists' or 'There is no such true proposition as that Sherlock Holmes exists.' This analysis has the peculiar feature that we know that, if there is no such true proposition as that Sherlock Holmes exists, we know that there is no such proposition, period; and if there is such a proposition (on my view) as that Moses exists, that proposition is true. Nevertheless, someone who hears someone else saying 'Moses exists' may well say to him-thinking to himself that Moses is a mythical entity (that is, that there is no such person as Moses)\textsuperscript{14}: 'That is false; you are wrong.' In some sense he is extending the use of falsity here. It has already been extended, though, in the case of denying that there are bandersnatches in the Arctic, or that Sherlock Holmes is in this room. The man who said that Moses exists believed that he was uttering a true proposition, and, in fact, I think that he was. The man who denied it, though, did not, on my view—at least if he was a correct philosopher, which he probably wasn't—deny that proposition: rather, he thought that there was no true proposition to be enunciated.

So the tentative suggestion is this. Sometimes we use 'false' to mean that there is no true proposition of a given kind. In the case of the existential statement, if there is no true proposition, there is no such proposition at all, either. Sometimes, though, as in the case of 'There are bandersnatches in the Arctic,' we may not know which is the case. There may either be no true proposition that there are bandersnatches, or there may be such an animal as a bandersnatch, but none of them are in the Arctic, in which case the proposition in question would be false. But we lump the two cases together, and it is our ability to do so which gives the negative existential its use. The negative existential says that there is no such true proposition as that Sherlock Holmes exists—in fact, really no such proposition at all as that Sherlock Holmes exists.

Why aren't we more careful? I suppose because we are not philosophers (this is one possibility), and wish to have a convenient way of subsuming these two cases together under the same idiom, rather than saying something as complicated as my analysis. We do seem to say 'Look, there aren't any bandersnatches in the Arctic,' though it may turn out that there is no such kind of animal as a bandersnatch at all.

Another possibility is, of course, that I am wrong about this, and I do feel very tentative about this complicated and messy view. But I

\textsuperscript{14} But 'Moses is a mythical entity' expresses a genuine proposition. The one who believes it, however, does deny that there is a true proposition that the person Moses exists.
haven't (nor have I seen anyone else) come up with a better one. And I feel about this last problem about empty names the same as what Russell said at the end of "On Denoting"—that whatever the true theory here may be, it will not have the simplicity that one expected beforehand.