

**Alberto Voltolini**

## **Fiction and Indexinames (Abstract)**

- Full-length article in: JLT 8/2 (2014), 293–322.

In this paper, I will start from considering some theoretical desiderata concerning sentences that directly or indirectly involve fiction: i) the fictional use of language requires a context-shift; ii) one understands a sentence whether it is used fictionally or not; iii) one and the same proper name is, typically at least, used both within a certain work of fiction, i. e., when the sentence containing it is used fictionally, and outside that work of fiction, i. e., when, apparently at least, the sentence containing it is used nonfictionally yet in order to indirectly concern that very fiction; iv) different naming practices are to be mobilized by such different uses (independently of whether the apparently nonfictional use is actually successful as far as the reference of the name is concerned); v) independently of their really having a referent, proper names are always devices of direct reference. I will claim that once one takes proper names as indexicals of a particular sort, indexinames for short, one can account for some tensions that arise from the aforementioned desiderata. According to my proposal, a proper name »N.N.« is an indexical whose character is roughly expressed by the description »the individual called »N.N.« (in context)«, where this description means »the individual one's interlocutor's attention is called to by means of »N.N.« (in context)«. This character is a partial function that maps narrow contexts onto referents. Such contexts are enriched narrow contexts that over and above the traditional parameters (agent, space, time and world) also include an »acquisition« parameter, i. e., a parameter filled by a naming practice constituted by an informal act of dubbing (in which the dubber tries to call one's attention via the name to something), and usually also by a certain transmission chain. By appealing to this context, an indexiname automatically acquires a referent, if there is any (quite similar to the way things work with demonstratives once their narrow contexts are taken to be enriched by a further parameter, typically a »demonstration«-parameter). Furthermore, I claim that such a proposal works independently of one's ontological stance concerning fictional entities, that is, independently of whether one believes either that there are or that there are no such entities. Simply put, individuals of different kinds (actual fictional characters for realists, nonactual individuals for anti-realists) are picked out by indexinames in the relevant narrow contexts. Furthermore, I will argue that such a proposal is advantageous to similar indexicalist proposals such as the one put forward by Tiedke (2011), for that proposal seems unnecessarily ad hoc and it is still too undeveloped. Finally, I will try to show how this proposal can deal with some objections one may raise against an indexicalist treatment of proper names: a) the objection from validity, claiming that if names are indexicals, then one can no longer account for the validity of certain inferences involving them; b) the objection from contexts, claiming that if names are indexicals, then one cannot plausibly account for sentences involving them (in context) to be absolutely true (true in that context).

### **References**

Adams, Fred/Gary Fuller/Robert Stecker, The Semantics of Fictional Names, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (1997), 128–148.

- Almog, Joseph, *Dthis and Dthat: Indexicality Goes Beyond That*, *Philosophical Studies* 39 (1981), 347–381.
- , *Semantic Anthropology*, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 9 (1984), 479–489.
- Borg, Emma, *Minimal Semantics*, Oxford 2004.
- Braun, David, *Empty Names*, *Noûs* 27 (1993), 449–469.
- , *Demonstratives and Their Linguistic Meaning*, *Noûs* 30 (1996), 145–173.
- , *Empty Names, Fictional Names, Mythical Names*, *Noûs* 39 (2005), 596–631.
- Burge, Tyler, *Reference and Proper Names*, *The Journal of Philosophy* 70 (1973), 425–439.
- Caplan, Ben, *Putting Things in Context*, *The Philosophical Review* 112 (2003), 191–214.
- Castañeda, Hector-Neri, *The Semantics and the Causal Roles of Proper Names in our Thinking of Particulars: The Restricted-Variable/Retrieval View of Proper Names*, in: Klaus Jacobi/Helmut Pape (eds.), *Thinking and the Structure of the World*, Berlin 1990, 11–56.
- Crimmins, Mark, *Hesperus and Phosphorus: Sense, Pretense, and Reference*, *The Philosophical Review* 107 (1998), 1–47.
- Currie, Gregory, *The Nature of Fiction*, Cambridge 1990.
- Evans, Gareth, *The Varieties of Reference*, Oxford 1982.
- Everett, Anthony, *Empty Names and ›Gappy‹ Propositions*, *Philosophical Studies* 116 (2003), 1–36. [Web of Science]
- Friend, Stacie, *The Great Beetle Debate: A Study in Imagining with Names*, *Philosophical Studies* 153 (2011), 183–211. [Web of Science]
- Iacona, Andrea, *Truth Preservation in Any Context*, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (2010), 191–199.
- Kaplan, David, *Demonstratives*, in: Joseph Almog et al. (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*, Oxford (1989), 481–563 (Kaplan 1989a).
- , *Afterthoughts*, in: Joseph Almog et al. (eds.), *Themes from Kaplan*, Oxford (1989), 565–614 (Kaplan 1989b).
- , *Words*, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* suppl.vol. 64 (1990), 93–119.
- Kripke, Saul, *Naming and Necessity*, Oxford 1980.
- , *Reference and Existence*, Oxford 2013.
- Kroon, Frederick W., *The Fiction of Creationism*, in: Frank Lihoreau (ed.), *Truth in Fiction*, Munich 2010, 203–222.
- /Alberto Voltolini, *Fiction*, in: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/fiction/> (16.07.2014)
- Marti, Genoveva, *The Essence of Genuine Reference*, *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 24 (1995), 275–289.
- Napoli, Ernesto, *Finti nomi*, in: Gabriele Usberti (ed.), *Modi dell’oggettività*, Milan 2000, 197–219.
- Pelczar, Michael/Joe Rainsbury, *The Indexical Character of Names*, *Synthese* 114 (1998), 293–317.
- Perry, John, *Indexicals and Demonstratives*, in: Robert Hale/Crispin Wright (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, Oxford 1997, 586–612.
- Predelli, Stefano, *Names and Character*, *Philosophical Studies* 103 (2001), 145–163. [Web of Science]
- , *Contexts. Meaning, Truth, and the Use of Language*, Oxford 2005.
- , *Bare-Boned Demonstratives*, *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 41 (2012), 547–562. [Web of Science]
- Rami, Dolf, *The Use-Conditional Indexical Conception of Proper Names*, *Philosophical Studies* 168 (2014), 119–150.[Web of Science]
- Recanati, François, *Direct Reference. From Language to Thought*, Oxford 1993.
- , *Oratio Obliqua, Oratio Recta*, Cambridge, MA 2000.

- Sainsbury, Richard M., *Fiction and Fictionalism*, London 2009.
- Salmon, Nathan, *Frege's Puzzle*, Cambridge, MA 1986.
- Schiffer, Steven, *The Things We Mean*, Oxford 2003.
- Searle, John R., *The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse*, in: Peter A. French et al. (eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, Minneapolis 1979, 233–243.
- Thomasson, Amie L., *Fiction and Metaphysics*, Cambridge 1999.
- Tiedke, Heidi, *Proper Names and their Fictional Uses*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 89 (2011), 707–726. [Web of Science]
- Voltolini, Alberto, *Indexinames*, in: James Hill/Petr Kot'átko (eds.), *Karlovy Vary Studies in Reference and Meaning*, Prague 1995, 258–285.
- , *Fiction as a Base of Interpretation Contexts*, *Synthese* 153 (2006), 23–47 (Voltolini 2006a).
- , *How Ficta Follow Fiction*, Dordrecht 2006 (Voltolini 2006b).
- , *How Demonstrative Pictorial Reference Grounds Contextualism*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 90 (2009), 402–418. [Web of Science]
- , *All the Existences That There Are*, *Disputatio* 32 (2012), 361–383.
- , *Contexts, Fiction and Truth*, in: Alessandro Capone et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Pragmatics and Philosophy*, Dordrecht 2013, 489–500.
- Walton, Kendall L., *Mimesis as Make-Believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, Cambridge, MA 1990.
- Zalta, Edward N., *Referring to Fictional Characters*, *Dialectica* 57 (2003), 243–254.

2015-08-01

JLTONline ISSN 1862-8990

**Copyright** © by the author. All rights reserved.

This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and JLTONline.

For other permission, please contact [JLTONline](http://www.jltonline.de).

**How to cite this item:**

Abstract of: Alberto Voltolini, *Fiction and Indexinames*.

In: JLTONline (01.08.2015)

Persistent Identifier: urn:nbn:de:0222-003025

Link: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0222-003025>