Article

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Table

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Abstract: The primary aim of this paper is to provide a plausible fictional creationist explanation of when and how a fictional object comes into existence without a successful creative intention, focusing on the problem posed by Stuart Brock's nominalist author scenario. I first present some intuitions about parallel scenarios for fictional objects and concrete artifacts as data to be explained. Then I provide a sufficient condition for the existence of artifacts that can explain both cases. An important upshot of this is that there is an overlooked way to bring artifacts into existence that should merit serious consideration, and this leads to a version of the mind-dependence, but not the intention-dependence, view of artifacts.

Keywords: fictional creationism; fictional objects; abstract artifact; concrete artifact; mind-dependence; intentions; functions

1. Fictional Creationism and Intentional Creation

Fictional creationism is the ontological view that fictional objects are contingently created abstract artifacts whose existence is mind-dependent in the sense that their existence supervenes on our mental activities involving literary practices.[1] A major advantage of fictional creationism is that it can provide a straightforward explanation for our intuition that the following so-called *external metafictional* sentences, sentences that seem to be directly talking about fictional objects, are literally true:

(1)   Harry Potter is a fictional character.
(2)   Harry Potter is a distinct fictional character from Hermione Granger.
(3)   Harry Potter was created by acts involving literary practice.
(4)   There are many fictional characters less famous than Harry Potter.

Let us, for the sake of discussion, assume referentialism (or Millianism) about names, i.e., the semantic view that the semantic content of a name, if it has any, is simply its referent.[2] Then, according to fictional creationism, sentences (1)–(4) semantically express true singular propositions about the fictional character Harry Potter: (1) is true because Harry Potter has the property of being a fictional character; (2) is true because Harry Potter and Hermione Granger are two distinct fictional characters; (3) is true because Harry Potter has the property of having been created by acts involving literary practices; (4) is true because the quantifier in (4) ranges over fictional characters, and some of them are less famous than Harry Potter. This straightforward explanation makes fictional creationism theoretically attractive.

However, like other views about fictional objects, fictional creationism has its own costs. For example, fictional creationists should explain away the apparent truth of fictional negative existentials such as "Harry Potter does not exist" even though it is literally false.[3] Fictional creationists should also address the alleged identity problem of fictional objects, i.e., whether any satisfactory identity criteria for fictional objects can be given.[4]

The purpose of this paper, however, is to answer another important question, namely, the following "when and how" question posed by Stuart Brock [22]:[5]

When and How: When and how does a fictional object come into existence?

As Brock notes, one seemingly plausible attempt to answer this question is to invoke an author's intention to create fictional objects. So, let us first consider the following principle of when and how a new fictional object is intentionally created:

> **Intentional Creation**: A new distinct fictional object *o* is *intentionally* created by an author *S*, if and only if (or whenever) *S* has an appropriate intention to create the new fictional object *o* that is distinct from other fictional objects, and as a causal consequence of that intention, *S* pretends to believe a singular proposition about *o*.[6]

According to *Intentional Creation* ("IC" for short), an author's creative intention and her act of pretense caused by this intention play a key role in *intentionally* creating a fictional object. *IC* seems to provide a satisfactory explanation for many ordinary cases: Rowling probably had an appropriate intention to create new fictional objects that led her acts of pretense, and as a result of these acts she created fictional characters such as Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, a fictional school such as Hogwarts, and a fictional substance such as the Philosopher's Stone.

Despite the apparent plausibility of *IC*, however, *IC* does not provide a full-blown answer as to *When and How*, for it seems that some fictional objects can come into existence without successful creative intentions. In Section 2, I will first introduce Brock's nominalist Rowling scenario, to which *IC* does not apply, and list some related intuitions about both fictional objects and concrete artifacts as data to be explained. In Section 3, I suggest one sufficient condition for the existence of artifacts that can uniformly explain all the data presented in Section 2. This will show that there is an overlooked way to bring artifacts into existence that deserves serious consideration. In Section 4, I supplement the discussion in Section 3 with a detailed explanation of when and how fictional objects are brought into existence without successful creative intentions.

2. Artifacts That Come into Existence without Successful Creative Intentions

Stuart Brock [22] (p. 362) suggests considering the following imaginary scenario:

> **Nominalist Rowling**: J. K. Rowling is an amateur philosopher. She is a nominalist and thus faithfully believes that abstract entities of any kind do not exist. When she writes the Harry Potter series, she believes writing her stories will not produce any fictional objects and does not intend to create any fictional objects. But many people start reading Rowling's book and then talk about Harry Potter and Hermione Granger.

Brock points out that fictional creationists should still admit that even in the *Nominalist Rowling* case, the existence of fictional objects such as Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and the Philosopher's Stone is in no way threatened. However, since Rowling has no intention to create fictional objects, *IC* is silent on when and how fictional objects come into existence in this case.

In response, David Friedell [8] (p. 134) argues that *Nominalist Rowling* does not pose a serious threat to fictional creationism, since even concrete artifacts such as tables come into existence without the intention of creating a table. Consider the following scenario:

> **Nihilist van Inwagen**: Peter van Inwagen is a mereological nihilist and thus faithfully believes that there are no tables but merely simples arranged tablewise (van Inwagen [25]). When he carves wood in his garage, he does not intend to make a table; he is simply trying to arrange simples tablewise. However, when his neighbors see van Inwagen's wood carving, they come to believe that a table comes into existence.

Friedell appeals to our intuition that in the *Nihilist van Inwagen* scenario, a table comes into existence even if van Inwagen has no intention of creating it. For the purpose of our discussion, let us assume that ordinary concrete artifacts such as tables do exist (though this is controversial) and leave mereological nihilism aside. Then, according to Friedell,

the remaining research project is to discern the connection between *makers'* intentions and artifacts, because it seems that makers' intentions are still crucial in both the *Nominalist Rowling* and *Nihilist van Inwagen* scenarios: Although van Inwagen does not intend to create a table, he intends to arrange simples tablewise. Similarly, while the nominalist Rowling does not intend to create any fictional object, she intends to write the Harry Potter series to invite readers to engage in a certain pretense.

However, I do not agree with Friedell on what a remaining research project is. For it seems that there are very similar intuitive cases where both fictional objects and concrete artifacts come into existence without any kinds of the aforementioned *makers'* intentions, namely, the intention to arrange simples tablewise and the intention to write novels to invite readers to engage in pretense. Let us consider the following pair of so-called "swamp" scenarios:

> **Swamp Book:** Particles of swamp gas coalesce and form an object that is intrinsically identical to a copy of the book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in our actual world. Many people start reading *this book* and then talk about Harry Potter and Hermione Granger.

> **Swamp Table**: Particles of swamp gas coalesce and form an object that is intrinsically identical to the table in my kitchen. People who witness this incredible process come to believe that a table comes into existence.

In each case, I think we have at the very least the *ordinary* intuition that Harry Potter and a new table come into existence.[7] First, in the *Swamp Book* scenario, it seems that ordinary readers, even if they are well aware that there is no author of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, readily use the name "Harry Potter" after reading the book to talk about the fictional character Harry Potter. If their uses of "Harry Potter" become widespread in their linguistic community, then even literary critics might begin to write a character analysis about Harry Potter.

This observation suggests that even in the *Swamp Book* scenario, the speakers' uses of external metafictional sentences such as (1)–(4) still seem to be literally true. If so, then the same motivation we saw in Section 1 seems to force fictional creationists to admit that there exists a fictional character named "Harry Potter" in the *Swamp Book* scenario; it seems highly ad hoc for fictional creationists to claim that Harry Potter does not exist because there is no author, even though the inhabitants of the *Swamp Book* scenario use external metafictional sentences in almost exactly the same way as we do (except when talking about the author).[8]

Likewise, I believe that as ordinary people, not philosophers, we have the intuition that a new table comes into existence in the *Swamp Table* scenario. Seeing an ordinary table-shaped object made from particles of swamp gas, ordinary people will naturally believe that a table comes into existence and be ready to use it to put things down, to eat, to write, to work, and so on. It is even possible that the table made from particles of swamp gas becomes a tourist attraction so that no one actually *uses* that table. In any case, it seems at least intuitive that there exists a table in the *Swamp Table* scenario, and this intuition is one of the data we should explain.[9]

In addition to *Swamp Book* and *Swamp Table*, I also expect that we have the ordinary intuition that Harry Potter and a table come into existence in the following scenarios, where makers fail to have a successful creative intention because they are mistaken or clumsy:

> **Inadvertently Created Potter:** When J.K. Rowling wrote the Harry Potter series, she was under the mistaken impression that the protagonist, Harry Potter, was a real person. Introducing the name "Harry Potter", Rowling intended to refer to a famous English entertainer she thought existed quite independently of her novel. Readers, who read her book and are aware that Harry Potter is not a real person, start to talk about Harry Potter as a fictional character.[10]

> **Inadvertently Created Table:** Joy intends to make a piano bench. But due to her clumsy carpentry skills, the result comes out an ordinary table-shaped object. Her friends say that Joy has inadvertently created a table, and Joy agrees with them.

As in the *Swamp Book* scenario, in the *Inadvertently Created Potter* scenario, ordinary readers use the name "Harry Potter" to talk about the fictional character Harry Potter: their uses of external metafictional sentences such as (1)–(4) still seem to be literally true, and it seems to force fictional creationists to admit that there exists a fictional character named "Harry Potter" in the *Inadvertently Created Potter* scenario.[11]

Similarly, in the *Inadvertently Created Table* scenario, it is intuitive that a new table comes into existence: all the people, including Joy, believe that there is a table inadvertently created due to Joy's clumsy skills. They are about to use it to put things down, to eat, to write, to work, and so on. And when they finally use it, they will not think that they are using a table-shaped piano bench as a table, which in fact is not a table; rather, they will think that they are simply using a table.[12]

It is important to note at this point that I do not deny that philosophers' intuitions about the above scenarios may vary and sometimes be theoretically biased. However, I believe that there are at least some *ordinary* intuitions that Harry Potter and a new table come into existence in all six cases as the data we should explain or explain *away*. Of course, one could try to explain our intuitions about *Nominalist Rowling* and *Nihilist van Inwagen*, and at the same time try to explain *away* our intuitions about the other four scenarios through an error-theoretic explanation. However, my aim in this paper is to provide a non-revisionary, straightforward explanation without resorting to any error theory or biting the bullet: the remaining research project for me as a fictional creationist is to find a general principle that can explain the given data of three pairs of parallel scenarios between fictional objects and concrete artifacts. And if this project is successful, I think it should be preferred to a revisionary explanation. In the next section, I will provide one sufficient condition for the existence of artifacts that applies to all six cases, which is based on the concepts of a communal belief and an artifact function.

3. Communal Belief and Function

As a plausible working hypothesis for artifacts that come into existence without successful creative intentions, I suggest the following principle:

> **Communal Belief and Function:** (When there is no one who intentionally creates an object *o* as an artifact kind *K*), if one's actual belief that *o* belongs to a *K* is (or is disposed to be) *rigidly* accepted by a relevant community, and *o* has a *K*-function (or *o* already functions as a *K*), then *o* exists as a *K*.[13]

A few remarks will help clarify *Communal Belief and Function* ("*CBF*" for short). First, *CBF* provides a sufficient condition for the existence of artifacts, namely, one way of when and how artifacts come into existence. But *CBF* does not provide a full-blown existence condition for artifacts: it does not exclude other ways in which artifacts can come into existence. For example, *CBF* is consistent with the widespread view that artifacts can be created from the successful creative intentions of makers.

Second, it should be clarified how I use the term "rigidly" in *CBF*. I use this term to avoid a case where a communal belief is overridden by a maker's original intention and belief. For example, unlike in the original *Inadvertently Created Table* scenario, if Joy adamantly insists that she created a table-shaped piano bench and her friends recant their belief that there is a table and agree with Joy's claim, then in this case I have no objection to the view that she did indeed create a piano bench and that her friends' belief that a table was inadvertently created is overridden by Joy's creative intention and belief.[14] But sometimes, a communal belief that *o* belongs to a *K* is not overridden by a maker's intention, even if the community comes to believe that the maker's intention conflicts with their communal belief about *o*. In this case, I would say that the belief is *rigidly* accepted by that community. For example, today everyone believes that Bubble Wrap is a packaging material, and even

after realizing that the original inventors intended that Bubble Wrap be a wall covering and not a packaging material, we will not believe that Bubble Wrap is a wall covering and not a packaging material. The belief that Bubble Wrap is a packaging material is rigidly accepted in our community and is not overridden by the makers' original intention.[15] Likewise, in any of the scenarios presented in Section 2, ex hypothesi, the communal belief that Harry Potter or a table comes into existence is not overridden by Rowling's or van Inwagen's intention and belief.[16]

Lastly, according to *CBF*, a new artifact *o* of kind *K* comes into existence when two conditions are satisfied: satisfying only one condition does not seem to be sufficient for the existence of artifacts. Suppose *o* is rigidly communally believed to belong to a computer, but in fact *o* is just a computer-shaped prop.[17] In this case, of course, *o* is not a computer, and the obvious reason for this is that *o* has no function of a real computer. *CBF* is thus consistent with the possibility that a rigid communal belief about an artifact kind is massively *mistaken*.[18]

Conversely, if an object's having a *K*-function without a communal belief were sufficient to be an artifact of *K*,[19] then there would be too many artifacts of *K* than we expect: as Friedell (2018: 99) convincingly argues, my piano bench has always, for as long as it has existed, been a table, because it had a table-function: my piano bench could be used to put things down, to eat, to write, to work, and so on. In fact, every piano bench, every tree stump, and everything that has a table-function, is a table.[20] Of course, there may be a theoretical reason for allowing more tables than we expect. But other things being equal, it would be better if we could find a theory that avoids this unintuitive result.[21] In this respect, *CBF* is immune to this so-called overgeneration problem. Even if my piano bench has a table-function, it does not follow from *CBF* that my piano bench is also a table in an ordinary case where it is not rigidly communally believed to be a table.[22,23]

The preceding remarks are sufficient to clarify *CBF*. Now note that *CBF* predicts the desired result, namely, that Harry Potter or a table comes into existence in all the scenarios in Section 2. First, consider a table. For the sake of discussion, let us name the table-shaped object "Tso" in each of the three scenarios about tables, i.e., *Nihilist van Inwagen*, *Swamp Table*, and *Inadvertently Created Table*. Then, in all three scenarios, there is someone who actually believes that Tso belongs to a table, and this belief is (or is disposed to be) rigidly accepted by a community in each scenario. In addition, Tso has a table-function. So, according to *CBF*, Tso exists as a table in all three scenarios.[24] One lesson from this, I believe, is that for a table to exist, it does not matter *how* a table-shaped object came into existence in the first place, i.e., whether by a nihilist, by physical coincidence, or by accident. What matters is that there is a rigid communal belief that Tso belong to a table, and this fact explains our ordinary intuition about the existence of a table in three scenarios.[25]

Likewise, in all three scenarios about Harry Potter, i.e., *Nominalist Rowling*, *Swamp Book*, and *Inadvertently Created Potter*, even if there is no author who intentionally created Harry Potter, the belief that Harry Potter is a fictional object is rigidly accepted by a relevant community, and Harry Potter functions as a fictional object, i.e., its depiction in fiction invites us to pretend about Harry Potter that it is such-and-such. So, *CBF* predicts that Harry Potter exists as a fictional object in all three scenarios.

However, there is a significant difference between the above explanation of how a table comes into existence and the explanation of how Harry Potter comes into existence. In the case of the table, there first exists a table-shaped, concrete, composite object, Tso, and the communal belief that Tso belongs to a table makes Tso exist as a table. However, if a parallel explanation applies to Harry Potter, in order for the communal belief that Harry Potter belongs to a fictional object to make Harry Potter exist as a fictional object, it seems that there must first exist an abstract object, Harry Potter. But then, (*pace* nihilists) unlike a concrete composite object, it seems to require further explanation as to how this abstract object comes into existence in the first place. In the next section, I will explain this in detail by employing the concepts of mythical objects and imaginary objects.

Since *CBF* predicts the results that accord with our ordinary intuitions about all six scenarios, I believe we now have good reason to accept *CBF* until a compelling argument against *CBF* is developed. But before finishing this section, I want to point out two important ramifications of accepting *CBF*.

First, *CBF* is in favor of the view that a concrete artifact can come into existence through appropriation, i.e., a pre-existing object *o* can become an artifact without physical alteration.[26] For example, a new wine rack can come into existence by appropriating a suitably shaped piece of driftwood on the beach without physically altering it, i.e., by placing it in a kitchen and using it to place wine bottles long enough so that everyone accepts that it is a wine rack

But furthermore, *CBF* implies that appropriating *o* as an artifact kind *K* does not even require actual use of *o* as a *K*: even if no one uses *o* as a *K*, *o* can be appropriated as a *K* if *o* is rigidly communally believed to be a *K* and *o* has a *K*-function. That is, we can interpret the above scenarios, such as *Nihilist van Inwagen*, *Swamp Table*, and *Inadvertently Created Table*, as cases of appropriating a pre-existing concrete object as a table by a rigid communal belief without actual use. Although I reserve the detailed explanation of appropriation by a rigid communal belief for another time, I would like to make three points about this: First, this at least accords with our ordinary intuition that there is a table in all the above scenarios, even if no one has actually used it yet. If there is already a rigid communal belief that Tso belongs to a table, and Tso has a table-function, then it does not seem to matter for the existence of a table whether one actually starts to use it or not, even though an actual use might induce a rigid communal belief in many ordinary situations.[27] Second, this poses a problem for those who deny appropriation by claiming that in alleged cases of appropriation *o* is just *used* as a *K*, but does not belong to a *K*.[28] This is because if there is a case of appropriation by a rigid communal belief without actual use, actual use is not necessary for appropriation. Lastly, I believe that *CBF* also implies the possibility of appropriating abstract artifacts. I will discuss this in more detail in the next section.

The second and, in my opinion, more significant ramification is that accepting *CBF* leads to a version of the mind-dependence, but not intention-dependence, view of both concrete and abstract artifacts. Artifacts can come into existence without makers' creative intentions, but since their birth still depends on the mental state of people, i.e., their rigid communal belief, this does not support the mind-independence view of artifacts. Still, it is not unnatural to call them artifacts in the sense that *we* bring these artifacts into existence unlike natural kinds. In sum, *CBF* shows that there is an overlooked but important way of bringing artifacts into existence that should merit serious consideration in favor of the mind-dependence (but neither intention-dependence nor mind-independence) view of artifacts.

4. How to Bring Fictional Objects into Existence without Creative Intentions

According to *CBF*, even if there is no author who intends to create Harry Potter as a fictional object, once the belief that Harry Potter is a fictional object is rigidly accepted and Harry Potter functions as a fictional object, Harry Potter exists as a fictional object. However, as I pointed out in the last section, it seems that there must first exist an abstract object, Harry Potter, in order for the communal belief that Harry Potter belongs to a fictional object to make Harry Potter exist as a fictional object. In this section, I will provide an explanation for this.

Here my suggestion is to employ the concepts of mythical objects and imaginary objects.[29] Let me briefly explain both in turn: First, mythical objects are abstract objects inadvertently created as a result of a person's mistaken belief.[30] A famous example of mythical objects is Le Verrier's Vulcan: Le Verrier mistakenly believed in the existence of the inner planet of Mercury, named it "Vulcan", and tried to entertain a singular proposition about Vulcan. As a result of Le Verrier's mistaken belief, a mythical planet Vulcan was inadvertently created. Second, imaginary objects are abstract objects created as a result of a person's propositional imagination.[31] Suppose Jin knows that there are no actual emperors

of France and the United States, but imagines that they exist, and names them "Nappy" and "Mappy", respectively. He keeps imagining singular propositions about Nappy and Mappy: that they are bald, that they hate each other, etc. As a result of Jin's imagination, imaginary objects, Nappy and Mappy, are created.

Let us now consider the following four sentences:

(5)   Vulcan is a mythical planet.
(6)   Vulcan is a distinct mythical planet from Phaeton.
(7)   Nappy is an imaginary emperor.
(8)   Nappy is a distinct imaginary emperor from Mappy.

It seems to us that these sentences are literally true. Just like fictional creationism, so-called mythical creationism and imaginary creationism have the great advantage that they can provide a straightforward explanation for the intuitive truth of (5)–(8): they are literally true because they semantically express true singular propositions about mythical or imaginary objects. Thus, at least fictional creationists are guided to be mythical creationists and imaginary creationists as well.[32]

Accepting these two kinds of creationism, I suggest the following principles, which provide a set of sufficient conditions for the existence of a mythical object and of an imaginary object, respectively:

> **Creation of Mythical Objects**: A mythical object *o* is inadvertently created by a subject *S*, if (or when) *S mistakenly* believes that there is such an object as *o* and tries to entertain a singular proposition about *o*.

> **Creation of Imaginary Objects:** An imaginary object *o* is created by a subject *S*, if (or when) *S* propositionally imagines a singular proposition about *o*.

These two principles, *Creation of Mythical Objects* ("*CMO*" for short) and *Creation of Imaginary Objects* ("*CIO*" for short), provide creationists, I believe, with sources for explaining how an abstract object Harry Potter first comes into existence in scenarios such as *Nominalist Rowling*, *Swamp Book*, and *Inadvertently Created Potter.*

To be specific, in the *Nominalist Rowling* and *Inadvertently Created Potter* scenarios, when we, as readers, read Rowling's book, we *mistakenly* believe that there is a fictional character named "Harry Potter" created by Rowling, and we try to pretend singular propositions about Harry Potter. As a result of our mistaken belief, according to *CMO*, a mythical object Harry Potter comes into existence. In the case of *Swamp Book*, although we know that there is no author of the swamp book, when we read it, we, as readers, propositionally imagine singular propositions about the wizard named "Harry Potter". As a result of our imagination, according to *CIO*, an imaginary object Harry Potter comes into existence.[33]

Now we can see how an abstract object, Harry Potter, first comes into existence in all three scenarios: it first exists as a mythical or imaginary object. But if Harry Potter is rigidly believed to be a fictional character and functions as a fictional object in a community, then Harry Potter comes to exist as a fictional object. This completes an explanation we missed in Section 3: *CBF* predicts the desired result with the help of *CMO* and *CIO*: Harry Potter exists as a fictional character in all three scenarios about Harry Potter.

Here there is room for the concept of appropriating abstract objects. Just as we can interpret three scenarios about a table as cases for appropriating a pre-existing concrete object as a table by a rigid communal belief as we saw in the last section, we can interpret three scenarios about Harry Potter as cases for appropriating a pre-existing created abstract object (in our cases, a mythical or imaginary object) as a fictional object by a rigid communal belief. This yields a general explanation of appropriation that applies to both a table and a fictional object: they are appropriated by a rigid communal belief.[34] Although I reserve a detailed discussion of the question of how to appropriate an abstract object for another time, I believe that it deserves further discussion and serious consideration.[35]

5. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have argued that *CBF* provides a plausible and uniform explanation for various cases in which both concrete artifacts and fictional objects seem to come into existence without successful creative intentions. From this, I believe that *IC* combined with *CBF* allows fictional creationists to provide a satisfactory answer to Brock's *When and How* question.[36]

I have also pointed out two important ramifications of accepting *CBF*: First, *CBF* implies that there is room for the concept of appropriating both pre-existing concrete and abstract objects as concrete and abstract artifacts by a rigid communal belief. Second, if *CBF* is correct, there is an overlooked but important way of bringing artifacts into existence that should merit serious consideration in favor of the mind-dependence (but neither intention-dependence nor mind-independence) view of artifacts.

Of course, as I mentioned earlier, philosophers might disagree about the intuitions related to each scenario I have discussed in this paper. However, I believe that *CBF* at least respects our pre-theoretic ordinary intuitions about each scenario, and therefore, other things being equal, we are justified in accepting *CBF* until a more convincing principle is presented.

Notes

1   For proponents of fictional creationism, see van Inwagen [1]; Searle [2]; Salmon [3]; Thomasson [4]; Braun [5]; Voltolini [6]; Kripke [7]; Friedell [8]; Lee [9].

2   In this paper, in line with many creationists, I will assume referentialism about names.

3   The usual strategy of creationists to solve the problem of fictional negative existentials is that in most cases where speakers utter "Harry Potter does not exist", the proposition that Harry Potter does not exist *as a real person* is conveyed either semantically or pragmatically. See, e.g., Van Inwagen [1] (p. 308 n.11); Thomasson [4] (pp. 112–113); Predelli [10] (pp. 272–277); von Solodkoff [11]; Salmon [3] (pp. 302–303). See also Braun [5] for the gappy proposition approach to fictional negative existentials.

4   Everett [12,13] famously criticizes fictional realism for being committed to ontic indeterminacy. In response, Schnieder & von Solodkoff [14] suggest a default metaphysical assumption to avoid ontic indeterminacy; Thomasson [15], Cameron [16], and Woodward [17] argue that Everett's case leads only to harmless semantic indeterminacy; Lee [9] argues that the intention-based approach to fictional objects does not lead to ontic indeterminacy. For criticism of Schnieder & von Solodkoff, see Everett [13] (ch. 8.2) and Caplan & Muller [18]; for criticism of Thomasson, see Everett [13] (ch. 8.3); for criticism of Cameron and Woodward, see Cohen [19], Friedell [20], and Yum [21].

5   I think that an adequate answer to *When and How* will also shed some light on the identity conditions of fictional objects. But, I will not discuss this issue here due to the scope of this paper.

6   This is a sophisticated version of the principle as to when fictional objects are intentionally created, suggested by Lee [9] (p. 387). Braun [5] (pp. 609–612) and Friedell [8,23,24] are in favor of a similar principle.

7   Strictly speaking, the fictional character named "Harry Potter" in the *Swamp Book* scenario is numerically different from Harry Potter in the actual world, if fictional objects are individuated by their origin. (The same goes for the *Nominalist Rowling* scenario as well). For simplicity, I will ignore the ambiguity between our use of the name "Harry Potter" and the use of "Harry Potter" by the inhabitants of the *Swamp Book* world.

8   Thomasson [4] (p. 142) and Friedell [23] (p. 294) would claim that in *Swamp Book*, no literary work or fictional character comes into existence. For example, Friedell says, "Imagine Rowling, solely for the fun of it, arbitrarily punches keys on a computer. Like the proverbial Shakespeare-typing monkeys, she coincidentally types a string of symbols that corresponds to what (in our world) are the words of the Harry Potter novels. Intuitively, Rowling produces no novels or characters. She produces tokens of symbols that an observer (unaware of her arbitrary process) might naturally mistake for a copy of a novel that contains characters".

It may be true that in the above case, no character is created right after Rowling punches keys on a computer. But, as I have argued, it seems ad hoc to claim that even after ordinary speakers' uses of "Harry Potter" become widespread, and thus they use external metafictional sentences such as (1)–(4) in almost exactly the same way as we do, every ordinary speaker, including literary critics, is mistaken in thinking that there is a fictional character Harry Potter only because there is no author. Of course, Thomasson and Friedell might be able to develop a non-ad hoc error theoretic explanation for this intuition. But, other things being equal, the theory that straightforwardly explains our intuitions should be preferred. I will explain in detail how Harry Potter comes into existence in the *Swamp Book* scenario in Section 4.

9   Philosophers who believe that concrete artifacts are necessarily intention-dependent, such as Thomasson [26] (p. 53) and Baker [27] (p. 99), would claim that there is no table in the *Swamp Table* scenario. Juvshik [28] (pp. 9324–9325) has recently suggested an error-theoretic explanation for why we have the ordinary intuition that there exists a table in *Swamp Table*. According to Juvshik, it is in fact a case of tacit or *potential appropriation*: we are conflating the potential use of such an object with its being an artifact.

I sympathize with Juvshik's idea behind this, but do not fully agree with his explanation. (I will explain why in detail in Section 3). At this point, however, it is important to notice that I am not invoking those scenarios to defend the mind-independence view of concrete artifacts. Nor am I claiming that there would be no plausible error theoretic explanation for proponents of the intention-dependence view of concrete artifacts. The only thing I am claiming here is simply that there are at least ordinary intuitions that we should explain, and again, all other things being equal, the theory that straightforwardly explains our intuitions should be preferred.

10   This scenario originally comes from Zvolenszky [29] (p. 319), who argues that a fictional character can be inadvertently created without an author's creative intention. In her original scenario, Tolstoy was under the mistaken impression that the protagonist, Prince Bolkonsky was a real person. I have modified her example into one about Rowling and Harry Potter.

11   Friedell [23] (p. 294) claims that Harry Potter in this case is not a fictional character but a mythical object. Here, Friedell seems to think that the category of a mythical object and that of a fictional object are mutually exclusive, but I do not see why. As I have argued elsewhere (Lee [9], p. 395), if an object is categorized as a mythical object because it was inadvertently created, while an object is categorized as a fictional object because its nature is to be depicted such-and-such in fiction, there seems to be no inconsistency to say that Harry Potter is both a mythical and a fictional object in this case. I will discuss this issue in detail in Section 4.

12   I do not deny that there are many other cases where an object is used as an artifact kind *K*, even though it is not a *K* (cf. Evnine [30] (p. 415), [31] (p. 86, pp. 132–133); Cray [32] (p. 290); Friedell [23] (p. 293); Goodman [33] (p. 4)). But my point here is simply that we have the ordinary intuition that a new table is inadvertently created, at least in the *Inadvertently Created Table* scenario.

13   I assume in this paper that most artifact kinds have their own functions in order to simplify the discussion. A table, for example, has a table-function: it can be used to put things down, to eat, to write, to work, and so on. Of course, this assumption does not imply that *table* is essentially a functional kind.

14   Here, I assume that Joy's friends consist of a relevant community in this context.

15   For our purposes, I dramatize the historical example. The true story is that Alfred Fielding and Marc Chavannes, the actual inventors of Bubble Wrap, in fact realized that their product could be used as a packaging material after their attempts to sell it as a wall covering were unsuccessful. (I thank Yoorim In for bringing this example to my attention.)

16   There would be a complicated case in which, even if a communal belief that *o* belongs to a *K* is not overridden by a maker's intention, the maker remains stubborn and continues to believe and claim that *o* belongs to a *K'*. In such a case, it is difficult to answer whether the maker's belief is overridden by the community. However, even if the belief is not overridden, there is no problem with *CBF* accepting that *o* belongs to both a *K* and a *K'* in this case. (I thank Hwan Sunwoo for the helpful discussion on this issue.)

17   To avoid a controversial case, let us further assume that the creator of *o* intentionally created a computer-shaped prop, but later mistakenly comes to believe that *o* is a real computer, so that everyone, including the creator, rigidly believes that *o* is a computer.

18   Note that even if a rigid communal belief is not overridden by a maker's intention and belief, this does not mean that this communal belief is always retained in the presence of any counter-evidence. If they encounter evidence that *o* is not a computer but a computer-shaped prop, such as the examination of its internal structure, they will recant their belief.

19   This is in line with the functionalist view about a table, that *table* is a functional kind (See, e.g., Mag Uidhir [34] (p. 108), Brock [35], Goodman [33]).

20   Juvshik [36] (pp. 559–560) also provides a similar criticism against the functionalist view.

21   Goodman [33] (pp. 7–8) seems to bite the bullet and accept this consequence to some extent.

[22] I assume that in a normal situation, when we see an ordinary piano bench, we do not usually believe that it is a table. In what cases, then, do we usually believe that *o* belongs to an artifact kind *K*? Perhaps when properties that a *K* usually has are salient to us: we might believe that *o* is a table because the table-function that *o* has is very salient to us, because *o* has a similar shape to tables we have seen so far, etc.

[23] There is a related interesting question as to whether a new table still comes into existence in *Swamp Table* case even if there is nobody around to believe that a table comes into existence. Our intuition does not seem clear in this case, and although *CBF* does not commit to any particular answer, I would like to briefly mention two possible views in which I have no preference: First, if we want to say that a new table comes existence even if nobody believes it to be a table, then we should admit that there would be many more tables than we expect, though perhaps not too many. We could additionally include only objects in the domain of a table that have salient table-properties, which would make us immediately believe them to be tables when we encounter them. Second, if we want to say that no table comes into existence, then we should explain away our remaining counterintuition: perhaps we are conflating the *potential* belief we will have when we encounter that table-shaped object with its being a table. (I thank an anonymous reviewer and Wooram Lee for suggesting that I consider this issue).

[24] There are in fact some complications here. If Tso is a concrete composite object, but not essentially a table, then when a table comes into existence by a rigid communal belief, we would need a new name, say "Tab", for a table. Then, Tso and Tab would not be one and the same object because they have different modal properties. By contrast, if *table* is a phase sortal as phasalists maintain, then we would have only one and the same object, Tso, which is passing through a temporary phase *table*. For simplicity, however, I will disregard these complications.

[25] For the sake of argument, I assume that *table* is an artifact kind, so all tables are artifacts. But if it is trivially true that artifacts must be the products of successful creative intentions (which I disagree with), then my view would be that *some* tables are not artifacts, while *table* is still not a purely functional kind (and *CBF* must be modified as well). For the present purpose, however, I will not discuss this issue further and simply assume that *table* is an artifact kind.

[26] For those who accept appropriation, see, e.g., Baker [37] (p. 53 n.8); Koslicki [38] (p. 231 n.14), Juvshik [36]. For those who reject appropriation, see, e.g., Mag Uidhir [34] (pp. 99–100); Evnine [31] (pp. 132–133).

[27] Juvshik [36] (pp. 561–567) has recently suggested that communal acceptance is arguably sufficient for appropriation. However, his view differs significantly from mine in two aspects: First, according to Juvshik, some act or attempt is still necessary for appropriation, whereas in my view it is not. Second, Juvshik's concept of communal acceptance for appropriation requires *knowing* that the artifact is of a particular kind and *intending* that it be a member of a different artifact kind, whereas my concept of rigid communal belief does not require this kind of knowledge and intention.

[28] See, e.g., Evnine [31] (p. 86, pp. 132–133); Hick [39] (p. 3 n.6).

[29] Kripke [7] (p. 59) and Braun [5] (p. 615, p. 627 n.34) endorse all three kinds of objects, i.e., fictional, mythical, and imaginary objects, while Salmon [3] accepts the first two but remains neutral on the existence of imaginary objects (cf. Braun [5] (p. 627 n.30)).

[30] It is commonly assumed that a mythical object is an abstract object inadvertently created by a person's mistaken *theorizing* (See, e.g., Salmon [3,40]; Braun [5,41]; Kripke [7]; Zvolenszky [29]; Lundgren [42]). However, I believe that the idea of a mythical object can be uniformly applied to a mistaken *belief* in general, and so in this paper I will define a mythical object in terms of a mistaken belief for the sake of argument. (cf. Voltolini [43]: He distinguishes two kinds of mythical objects: legendary objects like Zeus and post-empirical posits like Vulcan).

[31] In this paper, I will use the term "imagination" only in the sense of *propositional* imagination, not in the sense of mental imagery.

[32] Cf. Caplan [44]: He plausibly argues that parallel arguments can be made for mythical creationism and imaginary creationism, similar to the argument for fictional creationism, thereby forcing fictional creationists to accept both. In this paper, I assume, for the sake of argument, that this reasoning is plausible; however, it is not without controversy, as Kroon [45] criticizes fictional creationism by arguing that the possibility of generalizing the argument for fictional objects to imaginary objects threatens the plausibility of fictional creationism. (See also Goodman [46,47] for criticism of mythical creationism and Zvolenszky [29]; Lundgren [42]; Voltolini [43] for responses and discussion.)

[33] It seems reasonable to me to say that in the *Nominalist Rowling* and *Inadvertently Created Potter* scenarios, Harry Potter is *also* an imaginary object, because when we read the book, we as readers propositionally imagine singular propositions about the wizard named "Harry Potter." However, there seems to be no problem in categorizing one object as both a mythical object and an imaginary object at the same time; they are not mutually exclusive categories.

[34] Cf. Juvshik [36] (p. 555): He points out that according to the Platonic view of musical works, literature, and film, abstract objects can be treated in the same manner as the appropriation cases: an agent appropriates a pre-existing object, such as a piece of driftwood or an abstract type of sound sequence, as a new artifact, such as a wine rack or a piece of music, respectively.

[35] There are indeed similar complications here, as mentioned in n.24. If new fictional objects are genuinely created by a communal belief, then it follows that the mythical object named "Harry Potter" and the fictional object named "Harry Potter" would not be one and the same object if they have different modal properties and different existence and persistence conditions. By contrast, if *fictional object* is a phase sortal which an abstract object can pass through, then there would be only one abstract object named "Harry Potter". But I will discuss this in detail at another time. (I thank Yoorim In for pointing this out.)

³⁶ Note that since *CBF* only provides a sufficient condition for the existence of artifacts, I do not exclude other possible ways, besides communal belief, in which fictional objects come into existence without successful creative intentions. In any case, the point is that *IC* combined with *CBF* explains all the relevant data we have so far. So, although I guess that fictional creationists now have a *complete* answer to Brock's *When and How* question, I would like to be careful about asserting it (I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting that I consider this issue).

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