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Fiction and common ground

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FICTION AND COMMON GROUND
A workspace account

Merel Semeijn

1. A definition of common ground that has to take into account non-face-to-face conversations cannot be formulated in terms of iterative de re attitudes.
2. By combining Matravers' theory of fiction interpretation and Lewis' analysis of the fiction operator we can model the difference between assertions and fictional statements in terms of different ways of integrating a temporary workspace into the stable common ground.
3. In terms of common ground updates, bald-faced lies are more akin to fictional statements than to regular lies.
4. The prefixes in "In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is a hobbit" and "According to *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is a hobbit" differ semantically: the former sentence means "In the worlds of *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is a hobbit" the latter means "*The Lord of the Rings* asserts that Frodo is a hobbit". Whereas 'In' is more appropriately used to report on the content of a fictional medium, 'According to' is more appropriately used to report on the content of a non-fictional medium.
5. Accounting for metafictional discourse (e.g. "Frodo was invented by Tolkien") requires us to complicate the fictive closure mechanism and introduce a new kind of object to our ontology.

6. Dynamic semantics, possible world semantics and belief revision logic can help us make sense of the interpretation processes involved in literary phenomena such as unreliable narration and imaginative resistance.
7. Long exposure to excessive power can corrupt even the humblest person.
8. Well, you're in your little room and you're working on something good.
But if it's really good, you're gonna need a bigger room.
And when you're in the bigger room, you might not know what to do.
You might have to think of how you got started, sitting in your little room.
– The White Stripes