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Fictitious Anchors

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1. Emar Maier's picture: Anchors as attitudes

'Anchored entity representations', as Hans Kamp calls them, or 'mental files', as I call them, are constituents of those attitudinal states whose content is singular. For example my belief that *that man* is a spy has singular content (it is about a particular individual, referred to through the demonstrative concept 'that man'), in contrast to the general belief that there are spies. On the sort of account which Hans Kamp, Emar Maier and myself all accept, the singularity of an occurrent belief like this is due to the fact that the mental representation whose tokening constitutes the belief involves as a constituent an entity representation of the appropriate type : an entity representation whose deployment presupposes that the subject stands in a certain acquaintance relation to some object x . If the relevant relation actually obtains, the entity representation is *externally anchored* to (and the thought of which it is a constituent is about) the object the subject is suitably acquainted with. If the relation does not obtain but is (mistakenly) taken to obtain, the entity representation is still *internally*, though not externally, anchored. The thought of which it is a constituent purports (but fails) to be about a particular object given through some relation of acquaintance.

As Maier points out, following Kamp, the acquaintance presupposition associated with the entity representation — its 'internal anchor' — can be described by using the mode/content formalism suitable for the representation of attitudes. The subject who attempts to refer to a particular object by deploying a mental file based on some acquaintance relation R is committed to there being an object x such that he or she bears R to x . The subject therefore stands in a credal (belief-like) relation to the general proposition that there is an x such that he or she bears R to x . This enables Maier, again following Kamp, to represent internal anchors in the same way in which the attitudes are represented in DRT — by means of a *labelled DRS*.

Consider again the occurrent singular belief that that man is a spy. The subject who holds the belief takes herself to be seeing a man in front of her : that's the internal anchor. She believes that that man (whom she takes herself to be seeing) is a spy : that's the singular belief. The singular belief is represented as a labelled DRS $\langle \text{BEL}, K_2 \rangle$, where 'BEL' is the doxastic mode and K_2 is a DRS involving a variable (discourse referent) x for the man in question. That variable is *free in K_2* : it is only bound, outside of K_2 , by the occurrence of that same discourse referent in the universe of the DRS in the internal anchor. The internal anchor itself is represented as a labelled DRS, $\langle \text{ANCH}, K_1 \rangle$, where K_1 (the 'anchor-DRS') features the discourse referent x and the conditions '*See (i, x)*', '*In front of (i, x)*', and '*Man (x)*'.¹ The singular belief that that man is a spy inherits that discourse referent, so it is 'parasitic on' the internal anchor, just as, in 'John believes that

¹ Kamp, Maier and myself have different takes on what conditions an anchor-DRS involves, but I gloss over these differences and follow Maier for simplicity's sake.

he will catch a fish, and he wants to fry *it* for dinner', the desire to fry the fish is parasitic on the belief that *there is* a fish *x* that John will catch (on parasitic attitudes, see Maier 2015). The dependence is captured, in both cases, by letting the discourse referent in the dependent DRS be free in that DRS and bound, outside of that DRS, by the discourse referent occurring in the universe of the DRS it depends on.

For Maier, it seems to me, the difference between the two cases (the dependence of the speaker's singular belief on the internal anchor of her demonstrative entity representation, and the dependence of John's desire to fry the fish on his belief that a fish will be caught) is simply that internal anchors are existentially committing for the speaker who deploys the entity representation, while the belief that John will catch a fish is not existentially committing *for the speaker who reports that belief*. (It is, of course, existentially committing for John, the belief holder). Because of that difference, the speaker can say without contradiction: 'John believes that he will catch a fish and he wants to fry it for dinner, even though, actually, he will catch no fish'; but the speaker cannot say, without contradiction: 'that man is a spy, but I am not seeing any man around' (on the interpretation on which 'that man' is what philosophers call a *visual demonstrative*). This difference can be captured by letting the anchor-DRS occur at the topmost level in the hierarchy of discourse representation structures representing the speaker's worldview — what Julie Hunter calls the super-DRS K_0 :

The most global level of a DRS contains, in my account, only discourse referents and conditions introduced via the extra-linguistic context. The DRS (which might include sub-DRSs) that contains discourse referents and conditions introduced via linguistic means in a given discourse—i.e. the kind of DRS familiar from classical DRT—will be treated as a sub-DRS of this most global, extra-linguistic level of the DRS. (...) [In other words] the extra-linguistic context is represented as a super-DRS, K_0 , of the linguistic level DRS, K_1 . (Hunter 2014: §2.2.1)

On this view, it is tempting (though, as we shall see in section 6, somewhat misleading) to think of internal anchors as attitudes in their own right — indeed, as the most basic attitudes, those which (if all goes well) put us in direct contact with the outside world (the 'extra-linguistic context'). Maier gives the example of a subject who 'sees a glass in front of her, thinks it contains water, hopes it's cold, imagines it's vodka and finally intends to pick it up and drink from it' (§4.2). The first component of the subject's complex attitude state is the subject's visual experience ('sees a glass in front of her'). That experience, which has a content of its own, is the anchor through which a discourse referent for the seen object is introduced. The subject's *de re* attitudes toward the glass (the belief that it contains water, the intention to drink from it etc.) all inherit that discourse referent from the anchor. Maier does not call internal anchors 'attitudes' — he is rather cautious in his formulations — but in his framework internal anchors are, like the attitudes, intentional states endowed with content, and they are represented in the same way as the attitudes proper (by means of a labelled DRS). Their content is general (e.g. the subject assumes that she stands in a visual relation R to some object x) but if the state is veridical then there is an object to which the subject is suitably related, and the subject can form singular (*de re*) attitudes about it.

On Maier's picture, all of our *de re* attitudes are parasitic on anchors and inherit the discourse referents they introduce. Of course, other discourse referents can be introduced in discourse or thought 'below' K_0 . They are the *unanchored* discourse referents. Attitudes which, further below, inherit these unanchored discourse referents

(i.e. parasitic attitudes whose DRS involves a free discourse referent bound from outside but below K_0) are neither *de dicto*, nor *de re*, Maier points out. They have an intermediary status. In particular, they are not existentially committing, in contrast to the *de re* attitudes. So the speaker's belief that John desires to fry the fish (the fish John thinks he will catch) does not commit the speaker to the existence of that fish, in contrast to the speaker's belief that that man is a spy, which commits the speaker to the existence of a man in front of him.

There is a lot I agree with in this picture, but I think it has to be qualified. Doing so will enable us to avoid some of the unwelcome consequences that Maier draws from it when it comes to fictional discourse and its interpretation.

2. Proper names in fiction: three cases

Maier accepts the view (held by Walton, Lewis, Evans, Kripke, Currie and many others) that fiction is pretense and that the consumer of a fiction is led to *imagine* certain things. Imagination itself is an attitude, so the imaginative state induced by e.g. reading a novel can be represented as a labelled DRS $\langle \text{IMG}, K_n \rangle$, where 'IMG' is the imagination mode and the fictional DRS K_n corresponding to the story is updated as one reads new sentences of the text. Maier also accepts that a proper name NN carries the presupposition that there is an x named NN. Now proper names occur in fiction, and when they do, there are at least three possibilities (according to Maier). The first two possibilities are unproblematic, but the third one gives rise to a dilemma.

First type of case: the name labels an entity representation which is anchored and refers (or purports to refer) to an object in the outside world.² Thus *War and Peace* is a fictional text in which the name 'Napoleon' occurs many times. Since the text is fictional, the sentences are used to update the DRS corresponding to what the reader of the fiction is induced to imagine, rather than that corresponding to his or her beliefs about the actual world. But the imaginative states resulting from processing the sentences involve deployments of the Napoleon concept, an entity representation that is (internally and externally) anchored and refers to a real individual. The reader's fiction-induced imaginations are therefore parasitic on the internal anchor, that is, parasitic on the reader's belief that there actually is a man named Napoleon whom she heard about in class etc. What is fictional is what is said about Napoleon, but the individual talked about is not fictional : it's the real Napoleon. Fiction-induced imagination in that sort of case concerns a real individual.

Second type of case: the proper name (and the corresponding discourse referent) is introduced explicitly within the fictional discourse, as when one says 'Once upon a time there was a Princess named Isabella'. This sentence introduces a new discourse referent x in the universe of the fictional DRS K_n , together with the condition *Named* (x , *Isabella*). Such a discourse referent is not anchored, according to Maier.³ It is not introduced in K_0 , but below, in the universe of the DRS K_n representing what the fiction leads the reader to imagine. The reader knows that he is reading a novel, and he distinguishes between the objects (such as the book itself) with which he is acquainted, and the fictional objects he is led to imagine as a result of reading the book. These objects do not populate the universe of the topmost DRS corresponding to the subject's

² On the notion of 'labelling' an entity representation, see Kamp 2015.

³ I will question this assumption below (section 4).

beliefs about the actual world, but the local universe of the DRS K_n that is embedded within K_0 via the subject's awareness that he is imagining certain things as a result of reading the book. K_0 contains in its universe the subject himself (i) and the book he is reading (b), and it stores the complex condition INDUCES-IMAGINING (b, i, K_n), where K_n represents *what* reading book b leads subject i to imagine.

In these cases, further acts of reference to Isabella within the fiction ('Isabella had fair hair') update K_n by adding new conditions on x . The presupposition carried by the name is trivially satisfied since K_n already contains a discourse referent x and the condition *Named* ($x, Isabella$). The attitude induced by reading a sentence such as 'Isabella had fair hair' occurring later in the fictional text is therefore an imaginative attitude featuring a discourse referent x inherited from the fiction-induced imagination that there is a Princess x named Isabella. *All* the imaginative episodes involving that discourse referent are parasitic on the initial imagining whose content is the existential proposition. These later imaginative episodes are about a particular object, Isabella, but they are neither *de dicto* nor *de re*. They have the intermediate status talked about above.

Third type of case: Sometimes, the writer does as if a name had been introduced already, even though that is not so. Maier gives the example of the opening sentence of a novel (*The Casual Vacancy*, by J.K. Rowling) :

(1) Barry Fairbrother did not want to go out to dinner.

In this type of case the presupposition associated with the name (to the effect that there is an x named Barry Fairbrother) has to be resolved but (i) there is no bearer of the name in the actual world (contrary to the Napoleon case), and (ii) no individual bearing that name has been introduced explicitly within the fiction, since this is the first sentence of the text (contrary to the Isabella case). Some kind of accommodation must therefore take place, and there are two options, Maier says. As usual, accommodation can be local, or global. In this particular case, however, the choice takes the form of a *dilemma*, to which I now turn.

3. Maier's dilemma

The *first horn* of the dilemma corresponds to the 'local accommodation' option : The subject updates the content of his fiction-induced imaginative state by adding the proposition that there is a man named Barry Fairbrother. On that view, the consumer of the fictional text *imagines that* there is a man named Fairbrother, just as he or she imagines that there is a Princess named Isabella when she reads 'Once upon a time, there was a Princess named Isabella'. The existential proposition is implicit in the former case, explicit in the latter, but in both cases it is that proposition, locally introduced in the form of a new discourse referent and a metalinguistic condition *Named* (x, NN) in the DRS representing the reader's fiction-induced imaginative state, that is used to resolve ('bind') the presupposition of the name.

The problem with this view is that it violates the principle that, by default, the presupposition of a name should be accommodated globally. The principle is motivated by the rigidity of names. As Maier puts it, 'binding to anchors should be the default behavior for names, as it is the only option that leads to a referential reading' (§6.1). Admittedly, there are nonrigid occurrences of proper names, but they are rather exceptional and feel marked (see eg. Geurts' well-known 'Bambi' example). Counting

fictional names themselves as exceptions runs counter to the principle that fictional discourse mimics ordinary fact-stating discourse and works in the same way. Allow me to quote from my forthcoming book *Discourse Referents and Other Imaginary Objects*, where the principle is explicitly stated:

From both a linguistic and a cognitive point of view, the difference between genuine reference and pretend reference does not matter. Because pretend reference *simulates* genuine reference, the same type of linguistic material (referring expressions) is used, and the same type of cognitive ability (mental files) deployed, whether one genuinely refers or pretends to refer. There is no *formal difference* between genuine reference and pretend reference – whichever form genuine reference takes, pretend reference will take.

Indeed, there is evidence that proper names in fiction *are* rigid (Friend 2011). For that reason, it seems preferable to handle the occurrence of proper names in fictional texts by means of the same sort of analysis one gives of occurrences of proper names in normal discourse. If the rule, for ‘out of the blue’ occurrences of proper names in normal discourse, is global accommodation of the presupposition at the highest possible level (i.e. binding to anchors), that should be the case for fictional discourse too. This leads us to the other horn of the dilemma.

Second horn. To say that accommodation is global is to say that it takes place at the topmost level – the level of Hunter’s K_0 . In the case of fictional names, that seems preposterous. Evidently, the reader does not introduce a discourse referent for the fictional individual in her topmost representation of the actual world. She knows that the text is fictional and that the name does not refer. As Maier puts it, ‘global anchoring entails existential commitment’ (§8.1), so the global accommodation option seems to be ruled out from the outset, since the reader does not believe in the existence of the fictional characters she reads about.

But the global accommodation option can take a more acceptable form. Fiction is pretense, so everyone (including the global accommodationist) should accept that the reader does not *really* introduce a discourse referent for the fictional individual in her topmost representation of the actual world. Still, arguably, the reader who reads the novel *pretends* that there is a real individual she (the reader) is hearing about. Under that pretense, she deploys a (fictitious) vicarious entity representation anchored to that individual. (Vicarious entity representations are anchored entity representations that presuppose the existence of an object x to which the subject bears the epistemically rewarding relation of ‘hearing about’ ; a form of acquaintance relation that is not direct but mediated by the linguistic community.⁴) On this view, the discourse referent for Barry Fairbrother *is* anchored, but fictitiously. It is not a plain ‘unanchored’ discourse referent, as Maier maintains, but a ‘fictitiously anchored’ discourse referent. Maier ascribes this view to Kamp and to myself, and he acknowledges that ‘the fictional anchoring approach is ideally suited to account for intuitions of rigidity in counterfactual contexts’ (§7.2). But he offers two arguments against it, one of which he takes to be decisive. So Maier eventually chooses the first horn of the dilemma, despite its *prima facie* unattractiveness.

⁴ This use of ‘vicarious’ is Kamp’s (Kamp 2015 : 283-284). I use ‘vicarious’ differently in my theory of indexed files (Recanati 2012, 2016).

4. Maier's arguments against fictitious anchors

Maier's first argument against the fictitious anchor proposal pertains to the unwarranted asymmetry it allegedly introduces between the Isabella case and the Fairbrother case:

The fictional anchoring proposal treats reference to Fairbrother in the novel and to Isabella in the fairy tale as fundamentally different. While Fairbrother is represented by an anchor in the reader's mental state, Isabella [is] introduced locally by the straightforward DRT interpretation of the indefinite description ['a princess named Isabella']. However, intuitively both names seem to fulfill the exact same functions in the continuations of their respective stories, viz., referring to fictional characters. (§8.1)

The local accommodation proposal has the advantage of putting the two cases on a par: they both involve unanchored discourse referents, with the only difference that the existential proposition through which the discourse referent is introduced is explicit in one case (Isabella) and implicit in the other (Fairbrother). Or so Maier argues.

In response to that objection, I claim that a fictitious anchor is at work not only in the Fairbrother case, but also in the Isabella case. The storyteller pretends to be reporting known facts when she says 'Once upon a time, there was a princess named Isabella' (Lewis 1978). The reader's pretense follows the same lines: she pretends that she is being offered a piece of *testimony*, that is, she pretends that there is an individual x such that the narrator is acquainted with x and she, the reader, is 'hearing about' x . Accordingly, the reader opens a mental file fictitiously anchored to that individual via the (pretend) testimonial link.⁵ The Fairbrother case and the Isabella case turn out to be on a par, on the fictitious anchor proposal. This disposes of Maier's first objection.

I turn to Maier's fundamental objection. He argues that the global accommodation approach in terms of fictitious anchors *collapses into its competitor* — the existential imagination (local accommodation) proposal. To pretend is to imagine, so the reader who pretends that there is a real individual she is vicariously acquainted with is actually imagining that there is such an individual. The existential proposition that there is a man named Fairbrother the subject is hearing about is therefore introduced into her fiction-induced imagination. It does not occur further up at the level of K_0 where we find e.g. the proposition that there is a book of fiction the subject is reading and which leads her to imagine certain things. If it did, the reader would be committed to the existence of the fictional individual, but as we have seen she is not.

⁵ As literary theorists like to point out, the narrator is no less fictional than the character he or she is supposed to be acquainted with ; and so is the 'fictional reader'. It is fiction all the way down ! Vuillaume 1990 distinguishes between the 'primary fiction' (involving the fictional characters and their deeds) and the secondary fiction (involving the narrator who pretends to reports known facts, the fictional reader to whom the testimony is addressed, etc.). The narrative time itself belongs to the secondary fiction, as Maier acknowledges in his footnote 22 ('the time of narration (...) need not coincide with either the time of the production of the narrative, or of its interpretation by the reader', §6.1).

Because the second alternative collapses into the first, Maier chooses the first horn of the dilemma. He rejects the fictitious anchor proposal which both Kamp and I favour, and holds instead that the discourse referent involved when the reader of Rowling's novel processes (1) is an unanchored discourse referent x which the reader's pseudo-singular attitude (his imagination that x did not want to go out to dinner) inherits from the (accommodated) imagination that there is a man x named Barry Fairbrother. The case is therefore formally similar to that of John's desire to fry the fish that he believes he will catch.

5. Summing up

Genuine referential uses of proper names and other singular terms are uses for which there is both an internal and an external anchor. On such uses, the expression contributes its referent (determined by the external anchor) to the singular proposition expressed by the sentence in which it occurs. 'Failed' referential uses are uses for which there is an internal anchor but no corresponding external anchor. If the subject who says or thinks 'That man is a spy' is hallucinating and there is no man in front of her, the demonstrative mental file she deploys is internally but not externally anchored. It fails to refer, and the sentence fails to express a singular proposition. Still, this counts as a referential use, in a broad sense: the subject attempts to refer and presupposes that she stands in the appropriate acquaintance relation to the referent.

Fictional uses of names are neither genuine referential uses nor failed referential uses. They have in common with failed referential uses that there is no external anchor: there is no real Isabella, or Fairbrother, at the other end of the alleged testimonial link. The current debate bears on the internal anchor issue: is there an internal anchor in fictional uses of names as there is in failed uses? Maier's answer is negative, because internal anchors come with existential commitments, and the user or consumer of a fictional name is not committed to the existence of the fictional object (which she merely imagines). Maier concludes that fictional uses of names are not referential, but descriptive: 'locally accommodat[ing] the existence of an individual named 'Barry Fairbrother' inside the imagination DRS effectively lead[s] to a descriptive interpretation of the name.' (§6.3)

The fictitious anchor theorist responds as follows. It is true that fictional reference is not existentially committing (in reality), but it is in the pretense. So there is no need to deny that there is an internal anchor, in fictional uses of names. The difference with both genuine and failed referential uses is that, in fictional uses, the internal anchor is fictitious. It follows that we can unify the three types of use: genuine referential uses, failed referential uses, and fictional uses. They all count as referential in a suitably broad sense, since they all involve an internal anchor (a fictitious one, in the case of fictional uses).

Maier's response to that line of thought is the collapse argument — the 'fundamental objection'. Now I think that argument can be resisted, for it rests on two disputable assumptions: first, that internal anchors are nothing but credal attitudes with existential content; second, that imagination is an attitude on a par with belief, desire, intention etc. Once these assumptions are dislodged, I think Maier's lapse into descriptivism loses much of its motivation.

6. Responding to the collapse argument

As I pointed out from the start, I construe internal anchors as presuppositions associated with a certain type of entity representation involved in a certain kind of occurrent attitude. To hold an occurrent attitude is to token a mental representation of the appropriate sort, in a certain attitudinal mode (the belief mode, the desire mode, etc.). Some attitudes are singular, and others are general. Singular attitudes are such that the tokened mental representation contains as a constituent a mental file (anchored entity representation). To deploy such an entity representation presupposes that one is acquainted with an object, but that presupposition is not an occurrent attitude toward the general proposition that there is an object one is acquainted with. One may deploy a mental file in referring (or attempting to refer), *without* occurrently believing that one is *R*-related to an *x*. For example, the subject may not have the *concepts* required to form the occurrent belief that there is an *x* such that he or she stands in relation *R* to *x*. As John Perry writes,

There is a difference between being able to think of a thing or person in virtue of some role it plays in one's life, and being able to articulate that role in thought or speech and think of it as the thing or person playing that role in one's life (Perry 1997/2000 : 363).

Attunement to the relation that our self-notions have to ourselves, or our perceptions have to the object they are of, does not require belief or thought about the relation ; it requires know-how, not knowledge that (Perry 2012 : 99).

Dispositionally, of course, the subject 'believes' that she bears the appropriate relations to the objects of her singular thoughts, since she acts accordingly. For example, she reaches out to grasp the object she takes herself to perceive in front of her. The act of singular reference (in language or thought) carries existential commitments, which take the form of a general (existential) proposition the subject believes (in the dispositional sense). But referring (or attempting to refer) cannot be *reduced* to a credal attitude toward the existential content of the associated presupposition. One may believe the existential proposition that one is perceptually acquainted with an object, without actually deploying a mental file in attempting to refer to that object. Referring or attempting to refer carries presuppositions, corresponding to dispositional attitudes on the part of the agent, but we should carefully distinguish these three things: the occurrent attitudes, which may be singular or general; the act of reference (mental file deployment) which singular attitudes involve as an ancillary component; and the dispositional attitudes corresponding to the existential commitments of the act. This threefold distinction, in the spirit of Strawson (1950), is the first thing we need to resist Maier's lapse into descriptivism.

The second thing we need is a proper appreciation of what is peculiar about the imagination (in contrast to the other attitudes). On the view I favour, imagination is not an attitude like the others, because it has a secondary character: imagination is the simulation of (inter alia) other, more basic attitudes. As a result of that, imagination is not homogeneous: there are different types of imagination, depending on what is simulated. A lot of things can be mentally simulated: perception, action, reasoning (both theoretical and practical), the emotions, and of course the standard propositional attitudes. For example, belief can be simulated: that is the phenomenon known as supposition or acceptance. When one 'accepts' a proposition for the sake of argument, one pretends to assent to that proposition: what is simulated is a credal state BEL. That

form of imagination is phenomenologically very different from, say, imagery (visual imagination) but they both are the simulation of some more basic state. In this framework imagination is not a primitive attitudinal mode IMG but a complex mode PR(M) involving a 'pretense' operation PR and a basic mode M it operates on (e.g. BEL, in the case of acceptance). The heterogeneity of imagination (the diversity of its forms) comes from the diversity of the states being simulated.⁶

Let us now put the two ideas together. We distinguished three levels: the level of the occurrent attitudes (e.g. judging that that man is a spy, or wondering whether there are spies), the level of the component acts involved in such attitudes (e.g. thinking demonstratively about a certain man, or deploying the concept SPY), and finally the level of the presuppositions of these acts, especially the existential presupposition that there is an object one is suitably related to. I take it that simulation can occur *at all three levels*: the level of the occurrent attitudes, the level of the ancillary acts, and the level of the presuppositions of these acts. Let me spell this out:

First level

The occurrent attitudes, whether singular or general, can be simulated in imagination. The subject who reads 'Once upon a time, there was a princess named Isabella' accepts (i.e. *pretends to believe*) the existential proposition that there was a princess named Isabella. She does as if the text was a piece of testimony she could trust and, as a result, not only forms the occurrent existential belief (held under pretense) but also opens a (fictitious) mental file for the person named Isabella, as she would if she was indeed offered a piece of testimony about a certain princess.

Second level

By deploying the fictitious mental file about Isabella the subject can simulate acts of (linguistic or mental) reference to Isabella when she processes the rest of the text. When she reads 'Isabella had fair hair' she deploys the mental file and *pretends to refer* to the (fictitious) individual existentially introduced in the opening sentence. Pretending to refer to an individual is, of course, different from pretending-to-believe an existential proposition (just as referring to an individual in thought is different from believing an existential proposition).

Third level

Just as the act of reference (mental file deployment) carries existential commitments, pretending to refer carries *pretend existential commitments*. In the Isabella case, the reader pretends there is an individual about whom she is given a piece of testimony, and she pretends to think about that individual through the testimonial link (and the mental file based on it) when she processes later sentences in which the name 'Isabella' is used: she does as if she presupposed the existence of an individual to whom, through the name, she bore a testimony-mediated relation. The same thing holds of the Fairbrother case, with the minimal difference that, in the Fairbrother case, it is also presupposed (under the pretense) that the subject is antecedently familiar with the individual she is hearing about.

⁶ See Mulligan 2015 on the Husserl-Meinong view that imaginative states are 'modifications' of more basic states which they simulate (Husserl 1900-01, Meinong 1902).

Thanks to these distinctions between levels (which descriptivists tend to ignore), the two alternative analyses of (1) — in terms of local accommodation or in terms of fictitious anchors — turn out to be substantially different. On the local accommodation story reading (1) triggers an occurrent attitude of imagining whose content is an existential proposition (that there is a man named Fairbrother). On the fictitious anchor story, reading (1) triggers the simulation of an *act of reference* (mental file deployment) at level 2, rather than the simulation of an occurrent credal state at level 1. To be sure, the act of reference carries its usual existential commitments at level 3: under the pretense, it commits the subject to the existence of an object with which she stands in the appropriate acquaintance relation, namely, a familiar individual named Fairbrother. But there is a difference between such a pretend existential commitment (level 3) and the imaginative simulation of an occurrent existential belief (level 1), just as there is a difference between the occurrent belief that that man is a spy (level 1) and the dispositional belief it presupposes, to the effect that there is a man the thinker is perceiving (level 3). I conclude that the fictitious anchor story does *not* collapse into its competitor.*

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