

## If You, My Reader! ...

On speech acts in narrative fiction - a challenge to the philosophy of language.

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The article addresses a problem with roots in the very inception of the concept of speech acts, and especially the distinction between mere locutionary acts and the performance of illocutionary acts. Austin himself described the language of fiction as "*in a peculiar way hollow or void*" and "*in ways parasitic upon its normal use*". And Searle talked about "*unserious*" use of language and later reached the conclusion that what seem to be illocutionary acts occurring in the telling of narrative fiction, has to be treated as simulations or pretensions of illocutionary acts rather than real illocutionary acts. Monroe C. Beardsley has followed a similar path in reducing speech acts seemingly performed in the narrative or authorial voice of fiction and poetry to mere representations of speech acts. Søren Kjørup and Wolfgang Iser has opted for "solutions" to the problem that imply that the speech acts of narrative fiction are parallel to but different from ordinary illocutionary acts, not complying with all the rules that normally apply. Paul Ricoeur takes a related stance, but for somewhat different reasons and extended to all texts, fiction as well as non-fiction, especially when fixated in writing.

The article aims to demonstrate that the problems are - admittedly logical - consequences of flaws or unreflected limitations in the original Speech Act Theory and its further development in the philosophy of Language, and that they concern both fiction and non-fiction. They stem from concepts of "existence" that are widespread in logical semantics (but are actually too simplistic), and the concept of "uptake" as formulated by Austin himself.

Roman Ingarden's concept of purely intentional objects is called upon. These objects exist insofar as they are the object of human intentionality (mental entities). Not non-existent but existing in a different sense than real objects. They are relevant for the analysis of both fiction and non-fiction and many other aspects of linguistics and literary theory in the broad sense. The article also points out that Searle in his later writings has introduced ideas similar to Ingarden's about *brute facts* versus *institutional facts* and the role of collective intentionality.

The "uptake" of texts fixated in writing or speech is handled in a way inspired by the work of Wolfgang Iser on the role of the real reader (not just the implied reader) in completing the chain of communication by concretization of the work (another idea inspired by Ingarden).