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Character

In the widest sense, "character" designates any entity, individual or collective – normally human or human-like – introduced in a work of narrative fiction. Characters thus exist within storyworlds, and play a role, no matter how minor, in one or more of the states of affairs or events told about in the narrative. Character can be succinctly defined as storyworld participant.

Now, for its part, the storyworld itself divides into the spheres of narration and of the narrated, the telling and what is told about. "Character" in the narrower sense is restricted to participants in the narrated domain, the narrative agents. Characters are introduced in the text by means of three kinds of referring expressions: proper names (including letters and numbers), such as *Don Quixote*; definite descriptions, such as *the knight of mournful countenance*; and personal pronouns (*I*, *she*). Names and definite descriptions occurring in a given work often originate with it, hence introducing original fictions, or occur already in earlier works by the same author or by others, thereby yielding new versions of the original fiction, or pick out an actual person, thus yielding a literary, sometimes highly fictionalized, version of the real individual.

Characters can be approached from different theoretical perspectives, each yielding a different conception and theory of character. In this chapter, we will concern ourselves with three major ones: character as literary figure, that is, an artistic product or artifice constructed by an author for some purpose; character as non-actual but well-specified individual presumed to exist in some hypothetical, fictional domain – in other words, character as an individual within a possible world; and character as text-based construct or mental image in the reader's mind. Throughout the chapter, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* will serve as our source of illustrations.[1] This classical Spanish novel (published in two parts, in 1605 and 1615, respectively) is the story of a middle-aged impoverished country squire who has been spending all his time reading chivalric romances about the feats of knights errant. He takes it into his head to go into the world as one, achieve fame and glory

through adventures, including fighting magicians and monsters, and win the love of a beautiful damsel. But the reality around him is of course quite different, so the novel as a whole becomes the story of the constant conflict between imagination and reality and its consequences, sometimes funny and sometimes moving.

Character as artifice

Don Quixote did not exist before Cervantes invented him; he is precisely the way his author presents him, and could easily have been otherwise. He was born when the text bearing his name was written down, and will go on living as long as at least one copy of it remains and at least one person reads it. And where and how does he exist? In the sphere of our individual imagination as an object of thought, and in the sphere of public communication as an object of discourse. Such, informally, are some of the basic tenets of this approach to character, rooted in contemporary aesthetic theory. Technically speaking, character can be defined from this perspective as a contingently created, abstract cultural entity, depending essentially for its existence on actual objects in space and time and on the intellectual activity of authors and readers.[2] On this view, characters are invented or stipulated by a human mind, and generated in particular cultural and historical circumstances through the use of language, following certain literary-artistic conventions. They are ultimately semiotic constructs or creatures of the word, and it is the socially and culturally defined act of fictional storytelling that constitutes and defines them.[3]

Texts are necessary for characters to exist and subsist; individual minds are needed to actualize them; and the end result is a relatively stable and enduring inter-subjective entity which can be the subject of legitimate public argument about its properties, for example, Quixote as mad, naïve, an idealist, etc.[4] We would thus all agree that, for Quixote to exist in our culture, the text of the novel needs to be available to, and actually read by, people in a given community. These readers then form in their minds text-based images of the Don, which they make available to others by talking or writing about him. The members of the community know they are all talking about the same individual, and when they compare their individual mental images of him they would usually agree about some of his features, thus forming a public image or notion of Quixote that does not depend on any one reader. Accordingly, while literary characters depend for their existence on both physical objects (texts) and individual states of mind, they are not reducible to or identifiable with either.

Characters are abstract in the sense that they do not exist in real space and time, and are more like concepts in this regard. Consequently they are not open to direct perception by us, and can be known only through textual descriptions or inferences based on those descriptions. In fact, they *are* these complexes of descriptions, not having any independent worldly existence. And in order to find out what properties a given character possesses or what claims about him are true, there is only one route to follow: examine the originating text, what is explicitly stated in it and what can be inferred from it according to standard procedures. Since characters are stipulated ("created," "invented"), it makes no sense to ask of their authors how they know that a character is thus and so, or to disagree with them about the makeup of any character. By writing their narratives, authors determine rather than describe the properties of their characters. The semantics of fiction is thus of the say-so variety. X is the case because the text says so.

In fact, the properties ascribed to characters need not even form a logically consistent set, let alone one conforming to actual world regularities. In Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) for example, characters are repeatedly killed off and brought back to life to illustrate various philosophical points raised by the author. While authors can assign their characters any properties they wish, in practice the properties authors assign to their characters are governed by some principle(s) of selection, ranging from lifelikeness (verisimilitude) to an ideological, thematic, aesthetic, or purely inter-literary one, e.g., parody of an earlier text and its characters. The latter is exactly what happens in *Don Quixote*, where the language, actions, and worldview of the chivalric romances are ridiculed and deflated when the Don tries to embody them in the actual world. Since characters are shaped by their authors to attain certain ends and effects, it makes perfect sense to inquire why and to what end they endowed their characters with this particular selection of features.

All texts are finite, while each entity can be specified with respect to an indefinite number of aspects. Consequently, textually created characters are radically incomplete as regards the number and nature of the properties ascribed to them. Generally, which (kinds of) properties are specified or not and how many are a function of the text's length and of the author's artistic method. Some authors are sparing on physical details, while others provide no access to characters' minds. Characters are also usually temporally limited (when we first meet the Don he is already middle aged), and discontinuous, in that not every minute or even year of their lives is presented in the text. Characters are thus partially indeterminate (schematic, not fully individuated), and are technically person-kinds who can be filled in (specified, concretized) in various ways and to different degrees. This is exactly what

is being done in literary character analyses, whether undertaken by students or specialists.

Thus any given character may be amenable to a whole range of alternative individuations, all of which are none the less compatible with the original. This one-to-many relation is simultaneously a major source of readerly imaginative re-creation and of endless interpretive controversy. While the stipulative, say-so semantics of character creation may be limited with respect to the amount of information it can provide, it is, by contrast, unrestricted with respect to its nature – hence the incredible variety in the selection and combination of properties one encounters in literary characters such as Don Quixote. In particular, one of the constitutive conventions of literary storytelling provides the option of authoritative portrayal, sometimes in the most direct way, of the working of other minds. The wide use of this totally unnatural access to other minds is one of the hallmarks of literary versus factual modes of characterization, and a major source of readerly interest in, and learning from, what are ultimately "paper people."

Further, literary figures, no less than actual people, beget other people and belong to groups or types. In this case, however, both begetting and affiliation are of course purely verbal and must be mediated through texts created by authors. We have already mentioned that figures with the same name often occur in several texts, by the same or by different authors. Such a succession of same-name figures may extend over centuries, as with Quixote. Viewing characters as historical cultural products, what can we say about the relation between the same-name figures in different texts? Are they the same one, variations on the same, or different alternative versions of the same?

From the perspective of artistic production, a genetic connection between originating and later text(s) is the crucial point. The later text(s) and the original one must be related to each other both historically and intentionally. The author of the later text must be acquainted with the characters in the earlier one, must intend to import one or more of them into his own storyworld, and must intend his readers to recognize their original version. A sequel to *Quixote Part I* (1605) published in 1614 by an anonymous author calling himself "Avellaneda" satisfies all of these conditions. As far as the character's properties are concerned, the original set may be supplemented, reduced, rearranged in terms of relative prominence, or modified, sometimes leading to complete inversion of the original, as when its key features are replaced by their opposites. One amusing example is Byron's *Don Juan* (1824), in which the traditional irresistible and unscrupulous seducer is turned into a shy young man seduced by women. But the shaping principle is always the same: continuity of source, and portrayal in light of the source.

Can the reader carry over the description of a literary figure from one text to another? Can we unite the descriptions of the same-named character in different texts by the same author or by different ones in order to get the complete story of X? While merging information from different texts about an actual individual – who obviously leads a text-independent life – is unproblematic as long as the details are compatible, there is no clear answer when literary figures are involved. One could claim that literary characters are text-bound and cannot be detached from the text or storyworld(s) in which they occur – that they cannot be exported across text and world boundaries. Others would claim, like Cervantes himself, that, as long as texts by the same author are concerned, this is legitimate. And indeed we do so as readers with respect to recurring characters, such as Quixote in parts I and II, or Harry Potter. Quixote in part II, for example, is much less of a fool and more of a reflective and pensive character who speaks eloquently about literature and education and who at the very end renounces the whole chivalric ideal as pernicious nonsense and dies a good Christian. Still others would point out to the undeniable historical process where inter-textual accretion, encompassing numerous works and authors, sometimes leads to the formation in our cultural encyclopedia of a "super" or "mega" character, a generalized literary figure such as Quixote, Faust, or Don Juan, which both synthesizes and transcends any individual figure of this name. Such stereotypes are based on the existence of a set of core properties ascribed to the figure in all of the works in which it occurs and considered essential to it, the sense of its proper name so to speak. In this perspective, the various individual Quixotes are alternative elaborations of one common core.

Finally, most literary traditions and genres have developed a whole array of literary types, that is, limited, fixed sets of co–occurring properties, which can be exemplified with additions and variations by numerous individual figures. To these belong damsels in distress, magicians, picaros, hapless lovers (all of whom occur in *Quixote*, if only in the Don's mind), and many more. In fact, narrative genres are defined in part by their particular stock of such underlying types. Another example would be the detective story with its shrewd private investigator, his sidekick, and the bumbling police inspector.

Character as non-actual individual

The foregoing deflationary view of character as simply a verbal artistic product, a paper person fashioned forth in some artistic-historical context, while probably being the closest to the facts of the actual world, is very different from the way we act when we get lost in a book or immerse ourselves in the world of a work of fiction. As readers, we find it perfectly natural and

intelligible to discuss the time and space of Quixote's peregrinations around Spain, we speak unhesitatingly of his looks and behavior, his state of mind, and the radical change in it shortly before his death, all as if he himself and his setting led a text-independent existence. We are willingly engaging in a game of make-believe in which we pretend that there is a spatio-temporal domain in which the Don and his "world mates" exist and act independently of and prior to any narrative about them; that the proper names *Don Quixote*, *Sancho Panza*, and many others do refer to or pick out specific individuals in this domain, while *Dulcinea del Toboso* does not; that some of the claims made by the narrator and the individuals he speaks about are true *tout court* while others are not – in a word, that we are reading a report about what independently and "actually" exists and happens in some domain.

From this standpoint, character can be understood as an individual existing in some world or set of worlds, both individual and world being very close or very far from the actual world in terms of properties and regularities. To the shift in perspective there now corresponds a shift in the kind of issues considered central or crucial. These issues now center on the basic conditions of existence, identity and survival (continuity, sameness) of an individual in a hypothetical domain (= fictional world). In turn, contemporary modal logic, and especially possible-worlds semantics, provide the theoretical foundation for this kind of inquiry. Modal logic is basically the study of what is to be considered possible or necessary in some world; while possible-world semantics is the study of alternative worlds, their governing laws, and the kinds of individuals inhabiting them.

Existence

Once a storyworld is established, one needs to map out its inhabitants by answering the questions who/what exists in this world, and in what mode. Any entity can exist in the fact domain of the storyworld (= the set of facts that make it up) or in any of its subdomains: the beliefs, wishes, intentions, and imaginations of one or more characters, or in a secondary embedded world projected by stories the characters read, plays they watch, etc.[5] In addition, characters form in their minds mental versions of other characters who, like them, exist in the fact domain. The total population of a narrative universe consists of *all* of the above. But how do we know in what sphere(s) a given individual exists, and especially whether s/he exists in the basic fact domain? Ultimately, it is only the authoritative discourse of an omniscient, usually impersonal, narrating voice which can answer this question. If stories are told by a personalized narrator or focalized through characters, some hesitation may remain as to the status of a particular

individual. But impersonal narrators too can achieve the same effect by qual-ifying their existence claims to read "X may have existed" or "some say that X existed." In some postmodern narratives narrators go one step further by first asserting the existence of a given individual in the fact domain and then denying it.

(Lack of) overlap between characters' mental images of the storyworld and its existents and the narrative facts crucially influences the dynamics of the action and its consequences. Evil enchanters exist in the fact domain of the storyworlds portrayed in the chivalric romances Quixote is obses-sively reading. The Don believes they exist in his own lifeworld as well, and sets out to fight them. But such agents do not exist in the belief worlds of his world mates, nor in the fact domain as established by the narrator. Sometimes individuals do exist in the fact domain, but their version in the mind of a character is wrong. An unattractive peasant woman by the name of Alonza Lorenzo does exist in Quixote's world, but the Don, needing a lady to adore, represents her in his mind as the beautiful lady Dulcinea. And a belief in some non-existent individual may start from a mere name, and then spread in a community and influence people's behavior. In Iurii Tynianov's story "Lieutenant Salso" (1924), a scribal error, "lieutenant salso" instead of "lieutenants also," creates a non-referring proper name. But people, starting with the Czar himself, begin to believe in the existence of such an individual and this in turn influences their behavior, including devising more and more properties and events for him, building a life story out of thin air.

Identity

Under this term we subsume three questions: what is the given individual like? (possession of properties, predication); what distinguishes it from all other coexisting individuals (singularity, uniqueness, differentiation); what kind of an individual is it (type or category membership, classification).

1. To establish the mere existence of an individual in a storyworld is a necessary but not sufficient condition for its being a full-fledged character, because at this point there is nothing as yet we can say about it. To this end, *individuation*, or the ascription of properties to an individual picked out by a referring expression, is essential. For the purposes of literary analysis it is useful to group the kinds of properties a character can possess into several dimensions: physical; behavioral (action-related) and communicative; and mental, with the latter being further subdivided into perceptual, emotive, volitional, and cognitive. "Character" in the everyday sense refers to one segment of the mental dimension: enduring traits and dispositions to action, in a word, personality. But this is *never* the only aspect of a character's set

of properties, and often is not even the most significant. Quixote's looks, behavior, and modes of communication, for example, are far more significant than any personality model one could attribute to him. The prototypical literary character is an entity with human-like exteriority and internal mental states defined by current cultural concepts. Both exterior and interior components admit of transitory states as well as enduring properties, with the exterior being perceptible by co-agents, while the interior realm is accessible to narrators only, if at all. In fictional worlds, characters can possess any selection and combination of properties one can dream up – not at random, though. The kinds of properties from the three basic dimensions and their combinations any character can possess are constrained in the first instance by what is possible in the given storyworld and, within these constraints, by the individual's role in the story. Some storyworlds, like the Greek epics, possess a dual ontology, whereby the two zones, human and divine, are governed by radically different rules of possibility and probability, and hence are inhabited by individuals with radically different properties (immortality, knowledge of the future, etc.).

Even though we assume in our game of make-believe that non-actual individuals are as complete in their world as we are in ours, only a limited subset of their properties can ever be specified. Since stories by definition involve change, at least some of these known properties of any character are not enduring but time-bound, and the character's total property set inevitably gets modified over time. The standard distinction between static and dynamic characters is based on the (non-)occurrence of major changes in a character's central psychological features. How many and what kinds of properties of an individual need to stay constant to preserve individual identity is once again a function of the nature of the storyworld. As with existence claims, so with predications: only individuation claims made by an authoritative narrating voice are universally valid, and they too can be weakened by modifying them as "possibly" or through an ironic tone.

Endowing a character with simultaneous incompatible properties (tall and short, young and old) turns him into a bundle of mutually exclusive strands which cannot be jointly realized in any narrative universe. Such are the impossible characters of postmodern narrative. Notice also that when one character ascribes properties to another, he himself gets automatically characterized in the process, say as perceptive or obtuse, reliable or not. One of the ways we infer that Quixote's grasp of reality is distorted is through his characterization of the people around him, for example seeing a group of prostitutes as "fair maidens" (I. 3). The ascription of properties, enduring or temporary, to a character yields a cluster of features attached to this existent. But characters seldom exist in isolation in storyworlds, and in addition to

being individuated they also need to be differentiated from one another. This leads us directly to the next issue, that of *singularity* or *uniqueness*.

2. How many qualitatively different individuals are there in a given story state, and who is who? To be able to answer these questions unambiguously, any two coexisting characters must differ in at least one property, including the presence of a property in one and its absence in the other. In the case of clones and the like, the only difference would be location in space and time. Science fiction likes to play with such problematic cases, employing both fantasy (teleporting, brain or mind contents transfer), and bizarre natural phenomena such as the bisected brain, where the number of individuals involved depends on the choice of the mental or physical criterion. Further distinctions would be along one or more of the basic dimensions. A situation one often encounters in fiction is that of physical indistinguishability between two individuals coupled with sharp mental or moral contrast (see, for example, Edgar Allan Poe's 1840 short story "Roderick Wilson"). But mental difference is directly accessible to the narrator only, while characters must identify one another by appearance, thereby leading to potential confusion and mistaken identification. Sharp contrast along all three dimensions leads to maximum distinctness and contrast, embodied for example in the traditional comical pair aptly used by Cervantes: the short, fat, happy, and folksy Sancho; and the tall, gaunt, melancholy Don, with his aspirations to nobility and refinement.

3. Once we have established a list of properties for a given character, our next task consists in establishing a general macro-structure or intelligible pattern that will order these properties into a coherent whole. We are, in other words, looking for a general class under which this individual can be subsumed. Such classes are the basis for a system of *categorization* which will enable us to map out the total landscape of the storyworld in terms of the kinds of entities it contains. Obviously, different aspects can serve as a basis for a system of classification, and different aspects will be significant for different kinds of storyworlds. Intuitively speaking, the species category seems to be most basic, as it seems to answer in a fundamental way the question "what kind of individual is it?" on the physical, behavioral, and mental levels simultaneously. Evidently, different storyworlds (science fiction, fantasy, realistic novel) will contain a different assortment of species, which, in some cases, may be quite different from our contemporary actual-world species spectrum. But no matter what the assortment is, a character will always be foregrounded and its category affiliation problematic if it possesses features belonging to different (orders of) species, such as human and animal/vegetable/machine. The problem becomes insurmountable when such a hybrid individual occurs in a realistic setting – which in principle

does not admit the possibility of crossing species boundaries – as in Kafka's stories "Metamorphosis" (1912) and "A Hybrid" (1917).

Beyond the fundamental species categorization, various biological (gender, age), cultural (ethnic), social, actional, and psychological categories can be employed. The most informative or significant dimension of categorization will clearly depend in each case on the key issues or concerns of the narrative world. In *Don Quixote*, for example, social class, especially nobility versus commoner, is a major consideration, as are intellectual and literary attitudes, which in turn determine the characters' systems of values and norms of conduct.

Sameness over time and across storyworlds

The kind and extent of change characters can undergo along any dimension are once again unrestricted in principle, and vastly different in different storyworlds. How much can a character change and still remain the same individual? And who decides and according to what criteria? Very little can be said here that is universally valid. The narrating voice indicates a judgment of sameness in the midst of change by maintaining the same proper name or referring expression for a given individual, and this decision can be supported by the mere fact of the narrator being able to trace a continuous path in space and time for this individual. Normally, characters will identify themselves from the inside (the mental dimension), so that as long as they preserve their memory of past experiences they will think of themselves as the same continuing individual, even if their body is radically transformed. This applies, for example, to all metamorphosis stories from Ovid to Kafka. Their world mates, on the other hand, are limited to judgment on the basis of physical, behavioral, and communicative features, so that a radical change along these lines will lead to the denial of individual continuity/sameness. Dante's characters in the *Inferno* thus judge themselves the same in spite of the incredible change in their body shape and material, which prevents Dante the traveler from recognizing them as the continuants of any this-worldly individual. Conversely, a character with amnesia cannot establish continuity with any previous person stage, while to his world mates his sameness is assured because of physical continuity. Hence decisions about what constitutes sameness of character provide a major source of narrative interest and reader engagement.

Can the same individual exist in different fictional worlds, or is it one version per world, or are there rather one original individual and his counterparts in other worlds? The last view seems the most sensible. According to this view, sameness cannot extend across worlds, but an individual in

world B may well be the counterpart in that world of his original name-sake in world A, provided certain conditions of similarity are satisfied. Such conditions would involve key classificatory properties as well as the character's role in the dynamics of the events. As long as Quixote in any world is an older impoverished country squire who fancies himself a knight errant and who is constantly looking for adventurous engagements, it seems quite natural to consider him a counterpart of the original individual inhabiting the world created by Cervantes. Variation is thus accommodated, but only as long as specific key elements of the original are preserved.

Character as readerly mental construct

Whether characters are considered artifacts or non-actual individuals, we must first form mental images of them in order to be able to make claims about them. The cognitive-psychological approach views characters as just that: text-based mental models of possible individuals, built up in the mind of the reader in the course of textual processing. More precisely, characters are conceptualized here as complex readerly mental representations (constructs, portraits, mental files). This approach, unlike the previous two, is concerned not so much with the validity and specific nature of any given mental representation but rather with its textual base (cues, sources), the operations involved in its formation, the principles (rules, regularities) governing or guiding these operations, and the architecture of the final construct. Dealing with actual readers and reading, many of the claims made within this framework are at least in principle open to empirical testing. Reading a narrative text is (can be) understood as a complex, multistage activity of information processing, starting with the words on the page and yielding as its final product a representation in our mind of the basic components of the storyworld, in our case character. Reading for character is triggered or initiated by the reader identifying in the text a referring expression and opening a mental file bearing this name in which all further information about the corresponding individual will be continuously accumulated, structured, and updated as one reads on, until the final product or character profile is reached at the end of the reading act.

The most basic *operation* of character construction is the formulation by the reader of a text-based, first-order characterization statement ascribing a property of some kind to a character. Direct characterization is a one-step operation, while indirect characterization is multistage. A property (usually mental) is in that case indirectly ascribed to a character as the result of a process of inference starting with a property (usually physical or behavioral) directly ascribed to him. Watching a Western (cowboy) movie we can

characterize a certain individual directly as wearing a black hat and sporting a facial scar because we perceive these features. On the basis of these perceived features (and a genre convention), we then infer moral attributes and characterize this individual indirectly as a villain.

The *textual database* for reader-formulated characterization statements of either kind is wide and varied. In the first place, literary narrative abounds in direct as well as indirect characterization statements of all kinds (mental, behavioral, etc.) made by narrators and characters about themselves and/or others. The narrator characterizes the Don in detail, the Don does the same, and everybody around him is engaged in drawing conclusions about his mental state from his speech and conduct. But such statements cannot be taken over by the reader as valid and directly incorporated into his or her profile of Quixote. They are just a set of data, which needs to be critically evaluated. It is only through a complex process of computation that the reader can decide which of these claims she will endorse and use in her own character construction of Quixote. As already mentioned, a basic literary convention endows the claims of an impersonal omniscient narrating voice with truth by fiat, while all claims from other sources are fallible. And we also recall that whenever one individual characterizes another (or himself) he himself gets indirectly characterized as regards mental and communicative properties such as knowledge, reliability, honesty, and so on. Most of Quixote's characterizations of himself and of others (as, say, brave knight or evil magician, respectively) are rejected by us, yet they serve as a rich source of indirect characterizations of the Don himself.

Another major, and obvious, source of information for readerly characterization, both direct and indirect, is presented by an individual's actions: physical, mental, and communicative. In literary contexts physical features of an individual's appearance, gestures, mannerism, dress, and natural and human-made environment are indicators for inferences about his or her mental and moral features. Formal elements and patterns are also conventionally assumed to yield information about the individuals involved. Prominent here are character groupings and the parallels or contrasts implied, embedded stories, and how their characters (implicitly) reflect on the characters of the main story, and of course intertextual echoes and allusions, calling to our minds same-named or similar characters in other literary works.

We have repeatedly mentioned the crucial role of readers' inferences for constructing a mental representation of a character. This activity is governed by *rules of inference* of various kinds: those explicitly enunciated by the impersonal authoritative narrating voice, as in Balzac's novels; genre and period conventions (in cowboy movies, scar + black hat → villain); and those based on the reader's general world knowledge. These sets of norms

may conflict in a given case, and readers may then prioritize them in different ways, leading to different resultant portraits. Moreover, any individual inference is not a logical necessity: it is merely probable to some degree in the given particular context or situation, given this set of data and using this particular rule of inference.

The account of character construction provided so far has been piecemeal and static. But in reality it is a *process* or continuous mental activity, so one would like to know its major phases or sequence of operations. Recently, scholars studying the cognitive dimensions of narrative have suggested that character as mental model is constructed incrementally in the course of reading on the basis of a constant back-and-forth movement between specific textual data and general knowledge structures stored in the reader's long-term memory.[6] The construction is initiated, as already mentioned, by the reader identifying a referring expression in the text as designating a character. Next the reader establishes a distinct entity in his mental map to which features begin to be ascribed. As one reads on, guided by the "read for character" principle, one proceeds in a step-by-step fashion, making property ascriptions and gathering character-related information, which can in turn serve as a basis for such ascriptions. Once a certain number of properties have been accumulated, they often activate a general knowledge structure stored in long-term memory under which these properties can be subsumed, structured, and integrated into a character model. Detailed information-gathering and the search for an overarching category may well be running concurrently. The character models in question include schemas and stereotypes pertaining to both world knowledge and to the literary encyclopedia, i.e., knowledge about the structure and evolution of the literary system itself. Once a fit between data and category has been established, categorization takes place, and the reader may now proceed top down, integrating all the information available to this point, filling in the mental model, formulating expectations and explaining stored information, for example by relating an individual's action to intentions, beliefs, or dispositions associated with this category. Presumably this is also where one performs second-order characterizations. Such second-order inferences are based on relations between two or more time-frames, such as "character X is inconsistent," or on relations between properties, such as "character Y vacillates between reason and emotion."

As one reads on, additional information comes in which may fall into the established pattern or require its modification/adjustment. In extreme cases, the new information contrasts directly with the defining features of the selected category, causing schema disruption, decategorization of the individual (= we no longer think of him or her as the same "kind of person"), the

invalidation of previous inferences and the focused search for a new, better fitting category. This may lead to recategorization or to an inability to do so, in which case one acknowledges encountering a new, hitherto unfamiliar kind of character, which does not match any stereotype in the reader's extant knowledge base. Many innovative writers often seek to create precisely this kind of character. Moreover, since characters exist in temporal frames, a category may apply to one phase of a character's trajectory, whereas a different one is required for a later phase. Quixote thus undergoes a radical change in his beliefs and values towards the end of his life, where he no longer believes in chivalric romances and seeks to live again the peaceful life of the countryside. In such cases one may look for a second-order category to integrate the two phases, such as the rise and fall of a delusional behavioral syndrome. Finally, an individual may display simultaneously radically incongruent category features, preventing any overall integration or closure.

NOTES

1. For a recent English translation see Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*. Translated by Edith Grossman (New York: Ecco, 2003).
2. See Amie L. Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 5–14.
3. See Peter Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 7, 12.
4. See Amie L. Thomasson, "The Ontology of Art." In Peter Kivy (ed.) *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 78.
5. See Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), chapter 6.
6. See, for example, Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation* (Harlow: Longman, 2001); Fotis Jannidis, *Figur und Person* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004); and Ralf Schneider, "Towards a Cognitive Theory of Literary Character." *Style* 35:4 (2001), pp. 607–40. For a related approach, see Catherine Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).