1. Introduction
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- Under realist accounts (Concrete or Abstractionist) the claim that there might have been a pink swan is analysed in the following way:
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- Under realist accounts (Concrete or Abstractionist) the claim that there might have been a pink swan is analysed in the following way:

(1) There might have been pink swans iff there’s a world \( w \) such that at \( w \) there are pink swans
1. Introduction

(2) There’s a (non-actual) world at which there are pink swans
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- Deflationist approach
2. Fictionalism

“There are worlds in which blue swans exist” suggests a game in which we pretend that all and only the things that could happen in this world do happen in some world or other. The point of the utterance is to say that the modal facts are such as to make “there are blue swan worlds” pretense-worthy in the game—to say, in other words, that blue swans could have existed. I conclude that even if the tradition did not know quite what it meant in calling worlds metaphors, that is what they plausibly are (Yablo, 1996: 279).
2. Fictionalism

(3) There’s a brilliant detective at 221b Baker Street.
2. Fictionalism

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(3*) In the Holmes stories, there’s a brilliant detective at 221b Baker Street.
2. Fictionalism

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(3*) *In the Holmes stories*, there’s a brilliant detective at 221b Baker Street
2. Fictionalism

(4) According to the fiction $F$, there’s a world containing a pink swan
2. Fictionalism

(modal) $p$ iff $p^*$ (non-modal paraphrase of $p$)
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(modal) $p$ iff according to PW, $p^*$
2. Fictionalism

(modal) $\phi$ iff $\phi^*$ (non-modal paraphrase of $\phi$)

(modal) $\phi$ iff according to PW, $\phi^*$

(5) Swans could be pink iff according to the fiction of possible worlds PW, there is some possible world at which there are pink swans.
3. Which fiction?

…the fictionalist will explain that his own talk about possible worlds is to be understood, not as talk about what exists in fact, but rather as talk about what exists according to the realist's hypothesis of an immense plurality of robust universes (Rosen, 1990: 332).
3. Which fiction?

(modal) $\varphi$ iff according to CR, $\varphi^*$
3. Which fiction?

(6) There might’ve been pink swans
3. Which fiction?

(6) There might’ve been pink swans

(CR) There’s a possible world containing pink swans
3. Which fiction?

(6) There might’ve been pink swans

(CR) There’s a possible world containing pink swans

(Fictionalist) According to CR, there’s a possible world containing pink swans
3. Which fiction?

(6) There might’ve been pink swans **True**

(CR) There’s a possible world containing pink swans **False**

(Fictionalist) According to CR, there’s a possible world containing pink swans **True**
3. Which fiction?

(7) If swans were pink, then ducks would talk
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(7) If swans were pink, then ducks would talk

(CR) In each world that differs from ours as little as the pinkness of swans permits, ducks talk.
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(7) If swans were pink, then ducks would talk

(CR) In each world that differs from ours as little as the pinkness of swans permits, ducks talk.

(Fictionalist) According to CR, in each world that differs from ours as little as the pinkness of swans permits, ducks talk.
3. Which fiction?

(7) If swans were pink, then ducks would talk
False

(CR) In each world that differs from ours as little as the pinkness of swans permits, ducks talk.
Vacuously true

(Fictionalist) According to CR, in each world that differs from ours as little as the pinkness of swans permits, ducks talk False
4. Evaluation: epistemology

• Recall the concrete realist’s explanation of how we have modal knowledge:
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I. The modal truths are truths about a domain of possible worlds
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• Recall the concrete realist’s explanation of how we have modal knowledge:

I. The modal truths are truths about a domain of possible worlds
II. The principles which guide our imagination are true of that domain of possible worlds
4. Evaluation: epistemology

- Recall the concrete realist’s explanation of how we have modal knowledge:

I. The modal truths are truths about a domain of possible worlds
II. The principles which guide our imagination are true of that domain of possible worlds
III. When we imagine in accordance with these principles, the affairs we imagine are realised somewhere in that domain of possible worlds
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(8) There might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects
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(8) There might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects

(8CR): There’s a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(8) There might have been K non-overlapping physical objects

(8CR): There’s a world containing K non-overlapping physical objects

(8F): According to CR, there’s a world containing K non-overlapping physical objects
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(8) There might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects (determinate yet unknown truth-value)

(8CR): There’s a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects (determinate yet unknown truth-value)

(8F): According to CR, there’s a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects False?
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(9) It is not the case that there might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(9) It is not the case that there might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects

(9F) According to CR, there is not a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects Forced to say (9F) is true because of (8F) being false
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(9) It is not the case that there might have been $K$ non-overlapping physical objects

(9F) According to CR, there is not a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects Forced to say (9F) is true because of (8F) but (9F) is also False
4. Evaluation: explanatory power

(8F): According to CR, there’s a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects

**Truth-valueless**

(9F) According to CR, there is not a world containing $K$ non-overlapping physical objects

**Truth-valueless**
4. Evaluation: Ideology

• Some natural ways to gloss the fiction operator:
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I. If Concrete Realism were true, then $p$ would be true
4. Evaluation: Ideology

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I. If Concrete Realism were true, then $p$ would be true
II. If we suppose Concrete Realism, then $p$ follows
4. Evaluation: Ideology

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I. If Concrete Realism were true, then $p$ would be true

II. If we suppose Concrete Realism, then $p$ follows

III. It’d be impossible for Concrete Realism to be true without $p$ being true as well
4. Evaluation: Ideology

• Some natural ways to gloss the fiction operator:

I. If Concrete Realism were true, then \( p \) would be true
II. If we suppose Concrete Realism, then \( p \) follows
III. It’d be impossible for Concrete Realism to be true without \( p \) being true as well

• These glosses are modal!
4. Evaluation
“That’s all Folks!”