Some Problems of Glavaničová's Approach to Fictional Names

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In a recent issue of this journal, Daniela Glavaničová presented her theory of fictional names (see Glavaničová 2017, 396-402). As a part of the project within the field of philosophical analysis of fictional discourse (see at least Haraldsen 2017, Vacek 2017, Zouhar 2017 and Zvolenszky 2015), Glavaničová provided an analysis of fictional names based on the idea of fictional names modelled by necessarily empty individual roles. I limit my discussion of the proposal to the system of Transparent Intensional Logic (henceforth TIL),[2] since Glavaničová states: "The paper examines two possible analyses of fictional names within Pavel Tichý's Transparent Intensional Logic" (Glavaničová 2017, 384). Before that, though, I will sketch her proposal first.

First, the proposal is based on the notion of an *individual role*.[3] The notion is framed within the system of TIL according to which an individual role is a model for a position (e.g. office like the president of USA) an in-

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[2] For a detailed presentation of TIL see at least Duží, Jespersen & Materna (2010) and Tichý (1988).

[3] I advise the reader unfamiliar with the notion to read Glavaničová's introduction of the notion on pp. 394-396 of her article.

dividual might occupy. From the technical point of view, a role is a *functional object*. It is a function from possible worlds and times to individual (if any). Note that in TIL it is not hyperintension (i.e. a construction). Similarly as with offices in the real world, it is possible for a role to be unoccupied.

Such a property is grasped by the fact that, within TIL, functions are partial, i.e. they need not have a value on an argument. For example, consider an actual king of France. The office is currently empty, meaning the king of France actually does not exist (at least of one of its readings). And this is seems to be the befenicial core of Glavaničová's proposal.

Glavaničová states:

> Fictional names should be analysed in terms of individual roles… However, these individual roles are necessarily non-occupied (empty). As it is with the other expressions, we can pronounce a fictional name to speak about its sense (a construction), about its reference (a role), or about its extension (which, as it should be clear, does not exist). (Glavaničová 2017, 396-397)

There are several supposed positives Glavaničová suggests, namely: a) we can analyse an ascription of a property to fictional character as ascribing requisites to an individual role; b) we can explain the creation of fictional character by author picking an expression for the role; c) roles are abstract entities, therefore they are intersubjective; d) no new types of entities are presupposed, roles are no new queer enitities; e) the roles might not be described completely; f) roles can be empty, according to Glavaničová's proposal, there is no *real* individual Sherlock Holmes, therefore it is rather easy to analyse negative existential claims about fictional characters (e.g. Sherlock Holmes does not exist.) as true statements; g) we can model quantification over fictional characters; h) we can use constructions to differentiate among various empty roles; h) we can model personal attitudes towards fictional characters.

Glavaničová also goes throughout several objections against her proposal (see Glavaničová 2017, 399-402) yet, in my eyes, unconvincingly. My main objection is, that *in TIL, there is only one necessarily empty individual role*. Glavaničová does not seem to fully admit the fact. She states:

Since the reference of a fictional name is a necessarily empty role, one needs something to differentiate *between various empty roles*. This falls within the competence of constructions. They can embody the 'Holmes-ish' and 'Watson-ish' ways of believing, in an exact way. (Glavaničová 2017, 399; emphasis M.K.)

The reason is that an individual role is a functional object, whose identity is not given by its construction. Rather, it is given by the input/output mapping from definition range to the range of values. In other words, individual roles have the extensional criterion of identity. That means that two individual roles are different if and only if there is at least one argument of the proper type (tuple of possible world and time) upon which the values of these two roles differ. But, according to the proposal at issue, the fictional roles stand for, and only for, *necessarily empty* roles. A necessarily empty role is such a function which does not have any value for any proper argument. Since there is only one such role every fictional name stands for the same object.

Consequently, speaking about Sherlock Holmes does not differ from speaking about Watson, Moriarty, etc., going thus against the desiderata to differentiate between fictional characters. Being aware of the problem, Glavaničová adds:

One of the reviewers claimed that there could be only one trivialization of necessarily empty role in TIL, so every fictional name would have the same meaning. It depends on the identity criteria of constructions in general and constructions of *necessarily empty roles* in particular. I do not see any obstacle in differentiating between different (constructions of) empty roles on the basis of their requisites. E.g., the meaning of Holmes is different from the meaning of Watson, because the requisites for being Holmes differ from the requisites for being Watson. (Glavaničová 2017, 398, footnote 22; emphasis M.K.)

The above mentioned problem stems from the fact that there is only one necessarily empty role within TIL. For, the analysis of proper name in TIL goes via trivialisation, according to which there is only one trivialisation for each object. The problem, however, is that there is only one necessarily empty individual role.

In what follows, Glavaničová seems to suggest the possibility of new criteria of identity of constructions. It can be done, but at the cost of leaving TIL (at least in its present forms). One way or the other, her proposal will still have problems in both intensional and extensional contexts, since the contexts respect the substitution of equivalent constructions salva veritate. To repeat, Glavaničová's proposal assigns, undesirably, all fictional names to the same object.

The second objection is that the properties of individual office are type theoretically different from the properties of individual. Although Glavaničová benefits from this fact when analysing negative existential claims about Sherlock, it is hard to see how the proposal would cope with sentence such like:

"Sherlock Holmes weighs 160 pounds."

We do not seem to be talking about the property of any office. The sentence (if taken genuinely) must include ascription of weight to some individual on type theoretical analysis. If author stated, instead of intending that the ascription was not type-theoretically assigned to an individual, but rather to some other type of object, then she would seem to propose that ordinary relations (as weighs) have some non-ordinary meaning within fiction. But if the sentence includes ascription to an individual, that is Sherlock Holmes used *de re*, then the sentence will not have a truth value (since there is not any such an individual in the proposal). And this goes against any informativeness of any sentence containing fictional name used de re.

The third objection concerns Glavaničová's proposal regarding modalities within the fiction. As far as "Sherlock Holmes need not be a detective" is true *within the fiction,* the proposal has bad results. According to it, properties are ascribed to individual offices as their requisites. That means, however, that a fictional character (denoted by the use of a fictional name) has all its properties necessarily. If Sherlock Holmes is a detective it is necessary that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. In short, as far as there is a nontrivial modality within fiction (i.e. characters have at least some properties merely possibly), Glavaničová's proposal fails.

The fourth objection concerns the purported use of requisites when discerning necessarily empty roles. Following the reasons above, it evokes an attempt to discern two different numbers 1 within the same arithmetics.

There is only one such thing. Granted, Glavaničová understands that the notion of requisite (see Duží, Jespersen & Materna 2010, chapter 4.1), needs a different definition. She thus suggests the following:

> Another option is to use definitions of requisites from the above book, but change the material implication for some other sort of implication. A further option is to treat the notion of requisites as primitive. Finally, my preferred option is to define the requisites in terms of the content of the respective work of fiction. Note, however, that there are principal reasons why the essential properties cannot be defined once and for all: identity of fictional characters is interest relative, and so is the extent of their essential properties… (Glavaničová 2017, 400)

The question now stands: which kind of implication should we use? A strict implication would not help, at least in the case of necessarily empty roles. Another option is a scientifically empty way of solving the problem. In short, if we state that two objects (empty roles) differ because there are other objects (sets of requisites) that differ, we seem to have a criterion. But if we claim that the requisite is a primitive object, we do not explain the difference, but only state a presupposition. The third, preferred, way is too vague.

In conclusion, I find Glavaničová's proposal original, yet unintuitive. Although I see some positives of her proposal, I think that the negative consequences are too much to bear. I know that it is only an outline of a theory and the proper formulation will come soon. I therefore hope that this discussion note will contribute to improvement, as well as better understanding, of the view.

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