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INTRODUCTION: PROPER NAMES AND MODES OF EXISTENCE

Hasta los llamados entes de ficción tienen su lógica interna.
(Even so-called fictional entities have their own internal logic.)
Miguel de Unamuno, *Niebla*

This special issue of *Semiotic Studies* is devoted to proper names, and continues to some extent the line of research discussed in the contributions to the special issue of *Organon F*, 28(1), on names and fictions (Stalmaszczyk, 2021). Modes of existence of proper names pose interesting challenges and research problems for semiotics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of literature. Contributions to this issue concentrate mainly on fictional names, fictional discourse, and narrative fiction, but also on empty names, descriptive names, and names of institutions. The authors employ and compare different theoretical approaches, and the discussion may have important consequences for theories of meaning and reference, and for ontology.

In the opening text **Hanoch Ben-Yami** offers five theses on fictional characters and their names. He claims that fictional characters do not really exist and that names of fictional characters refer to fictional characters. Hence, names of fictional characters refer to things that do not exist, which is a strong argument in favour of divorcing the idea of reference from that of existence. Ben-Yami concludes that fictional characters affect real people and events through representa-

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tions in art, religion and other practices, and these representations, unlike the fictional characters, are real, and can unproblematically have real effects.

Petr Kořátko focuses in his contribution on fictional discourse, discourse about fiction, and the dynamic relations between them. The theoretical framework assumed by the author is connected with his interpretation and re-interpretation of the current work by Francois Recanati. The author's aim is not to replace one analysis by its rival but rather to show that the same set of data (connected with fictional discourse) can be used not only to perform various functions, but also to perform the same parafictional function in various ways. Kořátko pays special attention to the dynamics of relevant language games, including the fluctuation between "serious" and fictional modes of speech and re-evaluations of the status of previous utterances.

Enrico Grosso concentrates on the identity of fictional characters across different works of fiction. The main research question is connected with discovering the mental tools engaged in thinking about fictional characters, since we need to understand how we conceive of a fictional character in our mind. In search for the answer the author focuses on the cognitive aspect of the problem, and suggests that Recanati's theory of mental files might provide an appropriate cognitive tool. Following Recanati, Grosso employs the notion of the indexed file, which has a meta-representational function. Indexed files gather into networks according to the causal relations that subsist between literary works. This idea provides a useful criterion to determine whether a certain character is original or represents a new interpretation of a character already invented by another author and present in a different work.

Maciej Tarnowski discusses proper names as demonstratives in fiction. He compares several theories of proper name reference (including traditional descriptivism and causal-historical theories), and claims that the best account of proper names semantics is offered by indexicalism. In this approach it is possible to assign different values to a proper name across different contexts, hence indexicalism provides a uniform analysis of fictional, metafictional, and existential statements about fictional characters. Tarnowski further offers a modified account of indexicalism about proper names, and introduces the apparatus of hybrid expressions, which can be seen as an alternative to the more traditional Kaplanian semantics for demonstratives.

Elisa Paganini devotes her contribution to some methodological considerations underlying the choice between realism and irrealism. Within common sense approaches, fictional objects do not exist. On the other hand, philosophers discuss whether we should commit ourselves to fictional objects or not, whether we are committed to abstract objects or at least to possible objects (i.e., objects existing in other possible worlds). To put it crudely, philosophers divide into realists (according to whom we are so committed) and irrealists (according to whom we are not so committed). According to a widespread test, if fictional objects are required to give an adequate semantic/pragmatic analysis of either intra-fictional or extra-fictional sentences, then we are committed to them; if we can account

for this analysis without them, we are not so committed. Paganini demonstrates that this semantic/pragmatic analysis of fictional sentences is not a decisive test in favor of either realism or irrealism.

Commitment to the existence of entities is further discussed by **Mirco Sambrotta** who advocates the view that empty names are neither proper names nor any other kind of interpretable expressions. According to Sambrotta, a view of this sort usually makes it easy to account for the meaning of first-order sentences in which they occur in subject position: taken literally, they express no fully-fledged particular propositions, are not truth-evaluable, cannot be used to make assertions and so on. Yet, as noted by the author, semantic issues arise when those very sentences are embedded in the scope of propositional attitude verbs. Such intensional constructions turn out to be literally meaningful, truth-evaluable, and eligible for making assertions. The novel solution put forward by the author is to combine a version of sententialism with the idea that *de dicto* reports play a distinctive kind of metalinguistic expressive function. Under this analysis fictional names are then regarded as a mere subset of empty names.

Amalia Haro Marchal observes that one of the main questions related to the semantics of proper names (including proper names in fictional discourse) is how to explain the contribution they make to the truth-conditions of the utterances in which they appear: do they contribute with their referents? Or do they make a descriptive contribution with a descriptive sense? The author discusses the answer to these questions offered by Manuel García-Carpintero, and his Mill-Frege theory of proper names, and argues that the combination of both García-Carpintero's theory of proper names and his theory of fiction-making results in a flawed conceptualization of the speech act of fiction-making and the proposal needs further adjustments in order to explain how it is possible for sentences containing proper names to acquire meaning when used in fictional contexts.

Filip Kawczyński looks at descriptive names, rigidity, and direct reference, and he argues against Dummett's and Stanley's objections to the direct reference theory. As it is well known, Dummett and Stanley make use of the notorious descriptive names to formulate the objection against Kaplan's argument in favour of the direct reference theory. Kawczyński attempts to show that Dummett and Stanley made wrong assumptions about the modal properties of descriptive names and the descriptions that are used to fix the reference of such names. The author argues, contrary to Dummett and Stanley, that descriptive names and their mother descriptions (i.e., the descriptions which fix the reference of the descriptive name) have the same modal properties. He also shows that descriptive names are not "naturally" rigid like proper names or indexicals. Instead, they are designed to be rigid by founding them on their rigidified mother descriptions. Kawczyński concludes that descriptive names turn out to be neutral about direct reference—they do not support it, but they also do not undermine the idea.

Katarzyna Kijania-Placek concentrates on a different set of data to most studies in this volume, namely names of institutions. She advances the thesis that the proper names of some institutions, such as the names of universities, head of

state positions, or agencies, have semantics akin to that of names of cities or countries. A reference by those names may select particular aspects of institutions, in the same way that a city or a book selects the physical, legal, or informational aspects of objects in the extension of the nouns. In her discussion she employs Asher and Pustejovsky's conception of dot-type semantics, where a dot-type is formed by two or more simple types but is not their ordinary sum. In the conclusion, Kijania-Placek mentions further possible applications of this approach: an explicit semantics for other institutional names, and for other artifacts, such as artworks.

The last contribution adds a historical dimension to the issue. **Ben Caplan** discusses the achievements of E. E. Constance Jones, one of the first women to study philosophy at the University of Cambridge. Jones distinguishes between "existence in fiction" (e.g., "Dorothea" in *Middlemarch*), and "existence in imagination" (e.g., "fairies"), and proposes a novel account of negative existentials, on which "fairies are non-existent" is both meaningful and true, given that there are at least two kinds of existence: one that fairies have (so that we can talk about them) and another that they lack (so that we can truly say that they "are non-existent"). Caplan argues that her view has the resources to respond to Bertrand Russell's objections—accounting for negative existentials does not require distinguishing existence and being, nor does it require rejecting the existential theory of judgment (according to which every sentence is about something that exists). According to Caplan her views about existence in fiction and imagination fit with some of our ordinary thought and talk about fictional characters and imaginary creatures.

Though the individual contributions employ different theoretical approaches and theories it is hoped that this special issue offers a coherent account of proper names (especially fictional names), their internal logic and mode of existence.

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REFERENCES

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