TOWARDS A THOMISTIC THEORY
OF INTENTIONAL ("FICTIVE") INDIVIDUALS (II)[1]

S T A N I S L A V   S O U S E D Í K

ABSTRACT
Following Aristotle's stimuli, the medieval scholastics produced the theory of beings of reason (= intentional beings), i.e. beings that can only exist as an object of our reason (and in no other way). It is remarkable that an important component was omitted by the scholastic scholars, namely the teaching of intentional (nowadays called "fictional" more frequently) individuals, e.g. Sherlock Holmes, Hamlet, Hephaistos etc. This issue was dealt with later by A. Meinong, E. Mally, T. Parsons and E. N. Zalta. This contribution strives to propose an alternative theory founded on the scholastic, specifically Thomistic thought. The author distinguishes 1) individual description of intentional individual, 2) this individual itself, and 3) its "representative" existing sometimes in the real world. An intentional being, in this conception, has only the properties ascribed to it by its description and the property of individuality (and no other property). Nevertheless, an intentional individual bears these properties differently from the real individual. Therefore, the author distinguishes two kinds of predication, the real and the intentional one. In this context, other logical problems of intentional individuals are addressed. By the "representative" of an intentional individual (e.g. Sherlock Holmes) the author means e.g. its image made by the reader of A. C. Doyle in his (reader's) fantasy, or a real picture (illustration) in the Hound of Baskerville book, further the actor who plays the role of famous detective in the film adaption of the novel etc. The goal of the contribution is to show that if existence is the first-level predicate, it can be predicated informatively, for as such it is able to distinguish the individuals that exist really from those that do not.

Key words
Thomism; fictional individuals; predication.

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7. Some notes connected with logic

Many logical questions emerge in the context of intentional individuals.

a) On the difference in the predication of properties to real individuals and to intentional ones.

b) On an existentially nonhomogeneous universe of discourse (as I call the universe including the intentional individuals as well as the real ones).

c) On the predication of existence to intentional individuals.

d) What it is we are talking about in a negative existential proposition with an intentional individual as the subject.

Ad a: Let us first recall that the properties of an intentional individual "belong" to it in two different senses. *Extrinsic properties* belong to it in the way they do to real individuals[2]. Intrinsic properties, however, belong to it in a different way. If we ascribe the intrinsic property F to the *intentional* individual x, we are maintaining that the abstract property F we have attributed to it is hung on the pure substance of x as such (i.e. as abstract); i.e x is thus bearer of an abstract property.

A consequence of this difference is that there has to be a difference between the operations by which we attribute the property F either to a real individual, or (as an internal property) to an intentional one. In Latin, this operation of attributing is called "predication". We then have to distinguish between real predication and intentional predication. Natural language however does not distinguish between these two predications in some outwardly obvious way (for example, there is no obvious difference between the predicates "Cormoran *is wet*" and "Peter *is wet*"). It is nevertheless appropriate to agree on some distinction. This is not the place for specific proposals; it just has to be emphasised that we are not correcting natural language by making this distinction but only making it apparent.

Ad b. In colloquial language and in academic work alike we sometimes consider universes that are not existentially homogenous. An example from colloquial language is the sentence "Snowwhite exists in stories, but she's not real". The speaker, in his reassurance, considers in the first part invented individuals and in the second real individuals,

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[2] "To belong to a real individual" means for the (abstract) property F, that x has the *concrete* counterpart of F. Cf. the previous part in *AUC Theologica* 5, 1 (2015), p. 146.

and states that Snowwhite belongs to the former. An example from academic work of consideration of nonhomogeneous universes is the (may be false) sentence "King Arthur existed only in ancient legends, he was never a real person".

In both these sentences the verb "to exist" expresses only existence ∃ (which in logical notation we express by the existential quantifier). The phrases "Snowwhite" and "King Arthur" are abbreviations for descriptions referring to intentional individuals existing – if the sentences are true – intentionally (E_i). Some questions of a predominantly technical nature arise in connection with existentially non-homogeneous universes; nevertheless, no further I will pursue them.

Ad c. An example of a real existential predicate is "Obama exists really (E_r)"; and of an intentional one, "Snowwhite exists intentionally (E_i)". We will put the issue of the real existential predication of existence aside for the moment. Here we are interested only in the predication of intentional existence. This existence is, as we know, an extrinsic (not intrinsic) property, i.e. a property that the intentional individual *possesses* (and not such as is just hung on pure substance as on its bearer). If so, there must be some concrete property (ε_i) that corresponds in the intentional individual to the abstract intentional existence expressed by the predicate of the existential judgment (e.g. "Snowwhite exists intentionally, E_i"). It is rather difficult to describe this kind of concrete existence, but what it is like can be made clear if we compare an intentionally existing individual, e.g. Snowwhite, with an individual who really exists, e.g. the actor who plays (represents) her in a particular theatrical performance.

Ad d. An example of a negative existential proposition is "Hamlet does not exist". In connection with such propositions one can sense the difficulty that in a meaningful sentence – which the given sentence undoubtedly is – a subject with its own name has to refer to something. If then "Hamlet" does not refer to anything (as seemingly the proposition affirms) how can one truthfully deny existence?

The difficulty arises if, like Frege, we take into account only really existing individuals, i.e. if we always consider only an existentially homogeneous universe, including only really existing individuals. If we take into consideration an existentially nonhomogeneous universe, i.e., one that alongside really existing individuals includes individuals existing only intentionally, the difficulty goes away. Let us consider the statement "Hamlet does not exist" and assume we are considering it

in the context of a nonhomogeneous universe. In that case, the given proposition is equivalent to the proposition: "Hamlet does not really exist, he exists only intentionally." That makes good sense.

But what do we do about the meaning of negative existential propositions if we consider them in the context of a universe which is existentially homogenous, i.e., in the context of a universe including only real individuals, or one which includes only intentional ones?

That is a more difficult question. Let us first take into account the fact that we are considering a universe of real individuals only, and we then say that "Hamlet does not exist". In this case this proposition is equivalent to the proposition "it is not true that precisely one x exists such that x is H" (where either "H" is a part of a definite description of Hamlet). In such a case, the existence is a property of a concept, and thus a predicate of the second order. On this point we thus have to accept Frege's given limitation as true (we could naturally pose the question as to whether speakers using natural language ever limit their "universe" by the given method. But we will leave it at that).

What does the proposition "Hamlet does not exist" now mean in the context of considering individuals who exist only intentionally? We have to point out first that this proposition is ambiguous, because: 1. it can mean that Hamlet does not exist intentionally at a particular time. Such a proposition is (probably) true – for example, before Shakespeare invented his Hamlet or when nobody is thinking about the invented Hamlet; 2. the proposition can mean that Hamlet's intentionally-real existence came to a close because he died. In this sense one can say that Hamlet, who according to Shakespeare dies in the course of the Act Five, no longer exists in the rest of the play, i.e., he no longer has an intentionally-real existence.

8. The representive (C)

Intentional individuals can (and often do) have their representatives (performers). They occur either as objects of our imagination (perhaps everyone acquainted with an intentional individual, Hamlet, for example, has a way of presenting him in imagination), or in the real world. The real representative of Hamlet is the person who performs, i.e. a particular actor in a specific production. Obviously, it is not a relationship of identity between the intentional individual and its representative, but rather a *relationship of representation*. What conditions

must a particular real individual fulfil, for us to consider him/her the representative of a particular intentional individual? That is not an easy question, but it seems the representative must have all the properties the author ascribed to the relevant intentional individual. It is however necessary to distinguish; the representative has some of these properties as concrete ones (so for example the person who performs Hamlet has the property "to know how to fence"). Other properties are just abstract, "hung" on him by the audience for the period of the performance only (the person who performs Hamlet, for example, Laurence Olivier, has the property of "being a prince" as an abstract property only). If the representative has a property (concrete or abstract, it is not important), then (unlike the intentional individual) he also has properties which "follow" from it in the field of empirical individuals (if Olivier is the representative of Hamlet, then it follows from the fact that he has the abstract property "to by a prince" that he has the concrete property "to by a man" and the abstract property "to be of royal blood").

It is now time for us to return to the question alluded to earlier (see p. x): what is the position of the representative of an intentional individual that has opposite properties; for example, the actor who plays the hero in a dramatisation of the children's story of Peter Rabbit? The answer is very simple: such an actor has a concrete property, that of being able to talk; and an abstract property hung on him, that of being a rabbit. It is thus demonstrated that not only intentional individuals with opposite properties but their representatives too are conceivable.

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Conclusion

All the observations and reflections in this chapter aim to demonstrate that it is wrong to correct regular users of natural language who believe that they can characterise an individual with the help of the predicate "to exist (E_r, E_i)". Their belief is not founded on a linguistic misunderstanding. This follows from the fact that it is possible to design a consistent theory that explains their belief satisfactorily (i.e., the theory about intentional individuals roughly outlined above).

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