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Names Are Not Predicates

Abstract: Many examples are offered as evidence that proper names function as predicates. Not all of these cases speak to a name's semantic content, but many of them do. Some of these include what will be called "attributive," "quantifier," and "ambiguity" cases. We will explore those cases here, and we will see that none of them conclusively show that names are predicates. In fact, all of these constructions can be given alternative analyses that eliminate the predicative characteristics of the names they feature. In attributive cases, the names within them are to be understood as occurring in a comparative construction, not an attributive construction. In the last two types of cases, the names that occur are analyzed as part of a syntactically complex, but semantically simple referential device used to pick out a specific domain, rather than functioning as predicates that combine with determiners to compositionally determine their extensions. Both paraphrases can be given plausible semantic treatments that have significant advantages over their competitors. For this reason, there is less motivation to focus on predicative views of proper names.

1. Introduction

Current debates about the semantic content, or meaning, of proper names center around two contrasting views about their nature. The first view, known as the predicative view, offers an analysis of names as expressions that have properties as their semantic content.[1] The second view, known as the referentialist view, offers an analysis of names as expressions whose semantic content are singular individuals. Both views are justified, since there is conflicting data supporting each of them equally well. A defender of a predicative account, then, needs to explain how and why proper names are used referentially, whereas a defender of a referentialist account needs to explain how and why name are used predicatively.

There have been numerous developments of both the predicative and the referentialist views, the details of which we will not go into here. The aim here is not to

[1] I assume throughout that the semantic value of a predicate is a property of some sort. This is done merely for economy of expression. The points here go through independent of any particular conception of the semantic value of a predicate.

evaluate any particular view of names, but to instead eliminate the evidence in favor of one view over the other. The view rejected on these grounds shall be the predicative view due to the availability of an alternative explanations of the typical constructions used to illustrate that names are predicates. These alternative explanations will be developed to a certain extent and objections considered.[2]

2. Names as Predicates: Classical and Contemporary Motivations

Quine is the first well-known proponent of the idea that names ought to be understood as predicates (1953), though he does not develop the idea in any detail. For this reason, his work generates at least two separate interpretations of the predicative view of proper names.

On the first interpretation of the predicative view, we can understand name-predicates as associated with singleton sets — as having as their semantic values properties that apply uniquely to a singular individual. The advantages of this view over the referentialist view, however, are unclear, save for resolving puzzles concerning negative existentials, Quine's own motivation for introducing the idea in the first place.

According to Quine, names should be treated as predicates because doing so allows us to avoid the traditional problems associated with analyzing the content of empty names. Up until Russell's (1905) claim that names are nothing but disguised definite descriptions, the meaning of expressions containing non-referring proper names posed a certain metaphysical puzzle. It appeared, that in order to say of Pegasus that it was the winged horse of Bellerophon, and to say something sensible and true, Pegasus must in fact exist.

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[2] There are other constructions that challenge the referentialist view that are not considered. Given that this strategy here is to treat each case one by one, there are only so many cases that can be considered at one time. However, the cases we will consider are those most heavily relied upon to support predicative accounts, at least up to this point.

Even worse, take the negative existential sentence

(1) Pegasus does not exist.

On the referentialist theory of names prevailing at the time — that names are used as labels for singular individuals — a name must refer in order to have meaning. But given the truth of sentence (1), and the non-existence of Pegasus, surely this must be a mistake. However, as Quine noted, if we treat a name as a predicate, then we can assert sentence (1) without paradox. We can say that it is false that there is anything that instantiates the property of being Pegasus.

On the second interpretation of the predicative view, we can understand what will be termed "name-predicates" as associated with sets containing all of those individuals that bear the name in question, along the same lines as common nouns, or properties. The motivations for this view include the following: at times, we appear to use names as if they indicate a mode of being — as connoting certain properties that we can attribute to individuals — instead of simply referring to individuals themselves, thus illustrating that they are more than mere tags for singular individuals; we also sometimes use names as if they can be bound by quantifiers — as expressions that can take individuals as arguments — again showing they are more than mere devices of reference for singular individuals; last, sometimes the use of a name can engender which-questions in certain conversational contexts — as in which person bears a particular name is under discussion — showing that names might be better thought of as common count nouns, not as devices of reference. These uses of proper names give us good reasons for thinking of names as predicates, even though each type of use is slightly different. In fact, as we'll see, one of these types of uses is somewhat simple to deal with, whereas the other two are not. For this reason, most

of the emphasis of the following discussion is on providing a semantic account of the more difficult cases, though we will see a semantic account offered for the simpler case as well.

3. Cases for Names as Predicates

Before we look at the substance of the non-predicative treatment of the previously mentioned cases, it makes sense to first simply describe them in more detail, explain how they show that names are predicates, and illustrate each one with some examples. These examples and their interpretation will concern us for the rest of the discussion. It is, therefore, important to have a detailed look at each of them.

3.1 Attributive Cases

The first case, as mentioned, is one in which names appear to function as if they can be used to attribute properties to individuals. Take, for instance, the sentence

(2) The current President of the United States is a real Napoleon,[3]

or

(3) Here comes Lena with her two little Lenas.[4]

In these sentences, it appears that the names are being used to express properties, not to refer to things at all. In sentence (2), 'Napoleon' is being used to attribute Napoleon-ness to The President of the United States, for surely what's being said is not that the President of the United States is literally identical to Napoleon. Sentence (3), of course, is obviously not making an identity claim, as this would clearly violate the laws of equivalence relations. Instead, it appears to be attributing Lena-ness to Lena's two children.

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[3] See Burge (1973) for pointing out this kind of use of proper names.

[4] See Jeshion (2015a and 2015b).

3.2 Quantifier Cases

At times, we bind names with quantifiers. This suggests that they are in fact predicates, since only expressions that can, in principle, apply to more than one object are open for quantifier binding. Common examples of this phenomenon are as follows:

(4) All Franks are real chatterboxes

(5) Some Franks are real chatterboxes

(6) The Frank I know is a real chatterbox

Sentences (4), (5), and (6) treat the names contained within as expressions that can be modified by a quantity operator to make explicit how many of those in a specific domain have some property or other. In these cases, to indicate that a particular quantity of Frank's have the property of being chatterboxes.

3.3 Ambiguity Cases

Ambiguity cases are those in which there is a group of individuals properly understood as belonging to a set to which a certain predicate applies, in which a speaker wishes to pick out only one of the members of that group. A sentence that might be used to express the problem of ambiguity with respect to a proper name is

(7) That Frank is a real chatterbox.

In this case, we can understand sentence (7) as making it explicit which Frank it is that is in fact a chatterbox, not the one sitting quietly taking notes, but that one over there making jokes to his friends. The fact that we need to use a determiner to disambiguate between Franks indicates that 'Frank' is in fact a predicate.

4. Why Names Are Not Predicates

Now the question is, ought we to take the previous reasons as conclusive for believing that

names have as their essence a predicative function? The answer we will now explore is negative. For each case that apparently shows that names are predicates, there are alternative ways of understanding that case that do not have names playing predicative roles at all, even if they are modified by some kind of determiner. We'll now explore alternative analyses of each of the previous cases that eliminate the need to understand names as having an essential predicative function altogether.

4.1 Attributive Cases as Comparatives

Unlike it appears, in attributive cases, in asserting a sentence like (2), that the current President of the United States is a real Napoleon, we are not in fact attributing the property of being Napoleon to the current President of the United States. Instead, the non-predicative proposal begins with an individual as the semantic value for our embedded proper name 'Napoleon', and that individual is understood not as a simple, but instead as a set of properties (Montague, 1973).[5] We can now get a non-predicative compositional formal analysis that represents the content of sentence (2). Instead of understanding a sentence like (2) as a subject-predicate sentence, we should instead understand the 'is' in such constructions as comparative.[6] That is, we take the semantic value of the expression 'The current President of the United States', which happens to designate a specific individual, treat that individual as a set of properties — the set of all of those properties the current President of the United States has — and then compare those properties with Napoleon's properties. The content of sentence (2) then is understood as comparing the

[5] For more defense of this view taking into consideration different issues, see Tiedke (2011).

[6] Why appeal to such abstract theories of names such as Montague's here? Well, if we were focused solely on this case alone, in the end, it would be the theory that applies most straightforwardly to the apparent syntax of sentences with this form.

properties of the current President of the United States with the properties of Napoleon and of saying of those properties that they are similar, or that they overlap. This eliminates the predicativist view of names under consideration, since, on this proposal, the semantic value of the proper name ‘Napoleon’ is not a first-order predicate in any sense; it does not take individuals as an argument, unlike the standard analysis of predicates has it.

Other examples in which we use the expression ‘is’ in a similar comparative fashion include constructions like these:

(8) Boating is Heaven,

(9) Necessity is the mother of invention,

(10) Love is not a victory march,

(11) Cleanliness is next to godliness.

Like sentence (2), sentences (8)-(11) also resist a standard predicative analyses of their meanings. Sentence (8) neither expresses an identity claim, nor does it express a property that boating literally has. Similar things can be said for sentences (9)-(11). Sentence (2), then, is not the only example that pushes for sometimes giving a comparative analysis of sentences containing the expression ‘is’, many others do as well.[7]

Now what of sentence (3)? We do not, in this case, simply have two different names embedded within it. Rather, we have a more complex construction, ‘two little Lenas’. For this reason, we cannot straightforwardly rely on our previous analysis. A different strategy first must be invoked. This strategy paraphrases the complex construction in sentence (3) into a form that makes each use of each name explicitly represented. Sentence (3) is now rendered as having the following form:

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[7] In fact, this analysis could potentially be used to explain the content of metaphors generally.

(3)' Here comes $Lena_1$ with little $Lena_2$ and with little $Lena_3$.

Now we can give a straightforward analysis of (3)' as a comparative relying on our previous treatment. That is, we can now assign sets of properties to each of the embedded names as their semantic values. So, what we are actually doing in sentence (3) is comparing the properties of $Lena_1$ with the properties of the other two individuals temporarily dubbed 'Lena' in this particular context, even if it is not their true name, and saying that each of them are similar — share common properties.

Could we think of the rendition of sentence (3) as merely ad hoc? The answer is "no." Why not? Because no one would assent to having asserted that, in sentence (3), they intended to attribute the property of actually being Lena to Lena's daughters. So the sentence naturally calls for reinterpretation.

4.2 Quantifiers, Ambiguity, and Referential Domain Specifiers

Quantifier and ambiguity cases require significantly different types of treatments from the attributive cases, though distinct from one another as well. Our sample quantificational sentences (4), (5), and (6) invite us to infer that because we can bind only predicative expressions with quantifiers, names must be this sort of expression. Similarly, our ambiguity case involving sentence (7) appears to show that a multitude of individuals might share a particular name. This again suggests that names are more like predicative expressions than originally thought, assuming we take the previous sentences at face value. But suppose we don't.

As we will see, we can altogether eliminate cases of apparent quantificational binding of proper names, thereby undermining one specific and very important reason for believing names are predicates. We shall reject these cases as illustrating that names are

predicates by re-interpreting those quantificational structures so that they are not binding a proper name at all, but rather are functioning to specify a domain of discourse, though an appeal to some kind of determiner in the analysis is unavoidable. Appealing to these determiners however does not make the analysis quantificational, nor predicative. Instead, we will understand those determiners conjoined with proper names as a way of forming Kripke-style complex names for specific domains of discourse, known as domain specifiers. That is, we are now supposing that constructions like 'All Franks' are not understood as being composed of a quantifier and a predicate, but are understood instead as a complex device of reference that actually refers to the set of the Franks.

Next, suppose these domain specifiers do not even contain the use of a proper name at all.[8] To be less abstract, let us look at what a paraphrase of our problem cases might look like. Take sentence (4) All Franks are real chatterboxes. We can paraphrase this sentence as

(4)' Of those people named 'Frank': they are real chatterboxes.

Mutatis mutandis for sentence (5). 'Some Franks are real chatterboxes' becomes:

(5)' Of one or more people named 'Frank': they are real chatterboxes.[9]

Sentence (6) 'The Frank I know is a real chatterbox' we can paraphrase in the following way:

(6)' Of a person I know named 'Frank': he is a real chatterbox.

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[8] Although this is unnecessary, given the non-compositional nature of domain specifiers in the analysis, it makes it abundantly clear that it is not the name 'Frank' that is being analyzed.

[9] Similar to the use of mentioned, rather than used names, leaving out the standard quantifiers is not essential. It is done simply to avoid misinterpretation and confusion, and to make the semantic claim about how to understand the paraphrases line up more clearly with the syntactical structure of the paraphrases.

Lastly, sentence (7) — ‘That Frank is a real chatterbox' — becomes

(7)' Of that person named ‘Frank’: he is a real chatterbox.

These syntactic reconfigurations will allow us to paraphrase away the apparent evidence that names are predicates.

But, at this point, our syntactic reconfigurations are merely that — syntactic reconfigurations. We have yet to provide a semantic analysis of them. And nothing has been said about the relationship between the original construction and its reconfigured version. Of course, given the stated goal of eliminating a predicativist account of proper names, there is only one thing to say about the second of these issues — that our paraphrases, whatever their semantics might be, must give the actual meanings of their paraphrased counterparts. Otherwise, any semantic account of such paraphrases would not accomplish our stated goal. Though it is important to note that the analysis offered is not intended to correspond isomorphically to the parts of the analysandum. We are not here offering an analysis of the meanings of the names within, for example, quantified constructions, but rather of the entire quantified construction itself.

5. The Domain Specifier View of Quantifier and Ambiguity Cases

The semantic account we will consider treats the material antecedent to the pronouns in sentences (4)'-(7)' as our previously mentioned domain specifiers, or as explicitly referencing a universe of discourse. It treats the pronouns occurring within these sentences as anaphoric expressions that have the specified domain as their value, and the predicates are functions that take these domains as arguments and map them to true or false, to be spelled out in detail a bit later.

5.1 The Semantics of Domain Specifiers

As before, the initial hypothesis is that the domain specifiers in sentences (4)'-(7)' are to be treated as complex devices of reference akin to Kripke's treatment of complex names like 'The Holy Roman Empire' whose semantic value is not determined compositionally by the syntax and meanings of the parts of the expression that make it up.[10] Instead, the phrase is understood as being used to refer to a particular political entity. Similarly, the material antecedent to the pronouns in the previously offered paraphrases of sentences (4)-(7) is intended to pick out domains via acts of reference.[11] It is this core fact that makes the domain specifier view non-predicative in nature. Of course, we need a systematic account of how all of the various parts of our reconfigurations interact and contribute to their meanings, but first, let us examine whether there are any reasons to believe that we ought to treat the material antecedent to the pronouns in (4)'-(7)' as a complex name in Kripke's sense. Once we have established that there are such reasons, we can then return to our analysis of the meaning of the entire sentences in question.

5.2 Motivations for Treating Domain Specifiers as Devices of Reference

Clearly, there are theoretical advantages to thinking of domain specifiers as complex names; it allows us to avoid giving an analysis of the mentionings of the names and the determiners contained within them. But these are not the only reasons for treating them in this way, nor can it be, since mere theoretical advantages are insufficient to warrant belief in

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[10] But isn't whether names function in the way Kripke argues the very idea at issue? How then can I rely on this idea? Well, I can rely on this idea because I am not claiming that the relevant domain specifiers are proper names as we identify them syntactically in the language, but rather that they are devices of reference — logically proper names — the existence of which is not something the predicativist is out to deny, at least, not most.

[11] For arguments that even quantified noun phrases ought to be understood referentially, see Purver and Ginzburg (2004).

a theory, given that such motivations are ad hoc without further independent motivations coming from outside the theory itself. An independent reason for thinking that domains can and do serve as referents is that they are individuals in their own right. Another independent reason involves our intuitions about the semantic reference of the relevant domain specifiers. And a last independent reason relies on our intuitions about the modal profiles of sentences containing specific domain specifiers.

5.2.1 Domains as Objects of Reference

Can we treat domain specifiers as complex devices of reference? Why not? There is no reason for thinking that we cannot pick out domains by referring to them equally as well as we can anything else. Still, simply because we can do something, does not mean we should, or that we do. So why should we treat such complex phrases like 'Of those people named 'Frank':' as devices of reference? One reason is that we can and do refer to domains of discourse as entities in their own right. To simplify things, for now let us think of a domain of discourse as a set. In set theory, we usually use qualitative conditions, or properties, to define the boundaries of a set, determined by the individuals satisfying those conditions or having certain properties. These are the individuals who count as members of that set. If we have a nominalist bent, it is tempting to conclude that sets have no existence independent of their members and the properties of those members. However, just a simple glance at Leibniz's Law of the Indiscernibility of Identicals shows that sets are not merely individuated by their members, since sets can have properties that individuals do not and vice versa.[12] A set, for instance, has a cardinality, but its members need not. The singleton set containing Frank as a member, has the cardinality number 1, but Frank does not.

[12] Assume, for now, that there are atomic elements of sets that are not themselves sets.

Likewise, Frank has the property of being a smoker, but the set containing him certainly does not.[13] Sets, then, appear to have their own identity conditions that are independent of their members, and so there is more to a set's identity than a mere qualitative specification of its members can capture. Sets are individuals in their own right, and individuals in their own right are those to which we can refer.

This previous line of reasoning does not, of course, prove that our domain specifiers are indeed complex devices of reference, only that they could be, that domains are apt for being named.[14] To show that we, in fact, ought to treat our particular domain specifiers as complex devices of reference, we must turn to other considerations.

5.2.2 Domain Specifiers and The Semantic Role of Complex Names

To offer some evidence that our domain specifiers are functioning as devices of reference akin to Kripke's complex names, let us now turn to some arguments from Kripke himself, and reconsider sentence (4)' Of those people named 'Frank': they are real chatterboxes.

Suppose we misidentified the group of people named 'Frank'. The individuals we thought were named 'Frank' were really named 'Harry', and they were the real chatterboxes. The individuals who were actually named 'Frank' were in fact quietly reading books. Now, what do we want to say in this situation? We have two options. The first is to evaluate sentence (4)' as not having been about the domain we thought it was about — it was actually about another domain and what we said about that domain was false. The second option is to say of the domain specifier that, even though we did not identify the

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[13] Though this point may seem obvious to most, it comes to play an important role later.

[14] In fact, there is a historical precedence for this idea. Boole (1854) thought that domains should be thought of as ultimate subjects. And, later, Montague (1973) pushed the idea that even individuals should be thought of as sets, things we uncontroversially name all the time.

correct domain by description, that domain specifier nevertheless still refers to the set of individuals who are real chatterboxes. Call the first option, the predicativist response, and the second option the referential response.

If the hypothesis that our domain specifiers are functioning as devices of reference is correct, we should expect the referential response to prevail. Does it? Well, imagine a teacher attempting to point out to a class monitor a particular set of students who need to be disciplined. In this case, we would say that we were still talking about the group of chatterboxes, even though our manner of referring to them was mistaken. This example shows that, at least sometimes, our domain specifiers function as devices of reference. And the hypothesis is that in cases in which names are mentioned in domain specifiers, this is always the way they should be interpreted.

Nevertheless, this is not conclusive evidence. There are conversations in which the predicative response appears to be correct. For example, we can imagine a conversation in which people are deciding what to name their child, and someone tells them not to name them ‘Frank’, because all Franks are real chatterboxes. In this case, it seems the predicativist intuition prevails, since in this case, we are specifically interested in whether the group of Franks are real chatterboxes.

To find more conclusive evidence in favor of the referentialist hypothesis, then, we must turn to another argument of Kripke’s. Specifically, we need to examine his modal argument in the context of the domain specifier view.

5.2.3 Domain Specifiers and Modal Profiles

Let us now consider the modal profiles of quantified sentences containing proper names, and their reinterpretations. Consider the following sentence

(12) It is possible that all Franks are not chatterboxes,

which arguably would translate, on the domain specifier view, as the following sentence

(12)' Of those people named ‘Frank’: it is possible that they are not chatterboxes.

Intuitively, when we ask about the scenario represented by the above sentences we are interested in the properties of the actual people named ‘Frank’, or who are Frank. We are not interested in the possibilities for any and all potential persons named ‘Frank’, or who are potentially Frank, who may or may not be chatterboxes (assuming, for the sake of argument, an unrestricted view of the quantifiers a la Lewis). In other words, the properties of other individuals in other worlds that share the name ‘Frank’, or who are Frank, are not relevant for evaluating the truth of sentences (12) or (12)’, just as the properties of things potentially designated with the term ‘water’ are not relevant for evaluating the truth of modal statements about actual water.

Sentence (12), however, is ambiguous as it is. It is not clear whether to interpret the modal operator as operating on the entire set of Franks at the actual world, or the entire set of Franks at all worlds, which might vary from those at the actual world, assuming Frank is a predicate like any other. This, of course, constitutes a problem for the predicate view, since they would need to argue that when dealing with name-predicates, the modal operator always takes narrow scope. Likewise, sentence (12)’ is also ambiguous between readings, at least it is if we fail to accept that the material antecedent to the modal operator is a complex device of reference. However, once we do accept this, we can get the intuitive reading without the possibility of any ambiguity, given that there is no room for modal operators to create ambiguities in constructions that contain logically proper names. The

only individuals that matter for evaluating (12)' are those referred to in the actual world by the domain specifier, and the idea that such domain specifiers are devices of reference captures this intuition. This is, then, further evidence that our domain specifiers behave as devices of reference.[15]

5.3 Reference and the Domain Specifier View

Now that we have seen at least some evidence for the idea that the domain specifiers in (4)'-(7)' are referential in nature, we need to know in what sense they are referential. We also need to understand the relationship between these devices of reference, the pronouns that have values assigned to them, and the predicative element of sentences (4)'-(7)'.

5.3.1 Domain Specifiers, Reference, and Predication

We've already seen that sets have different properties from the individuals that compose those sets. We have also seen that our domain specifiers refer to sets. The problem that arises is that the properties predicated of those sets are not properties that hold of sets, but rather properties that hold of the individuals that make up that set. Domains cannot be chatterboxes, but of course, individuals can. Therefore, on the domain specifier view, it must be the case that when we use domain specifiers to refer, we somehow manage to predicate something of the individuals who are members of those domains, whether a multitude of individuals, as in the case of sentence (4)', one or more individuals, as in the case of sentence (5)', or single individuals as in the cases of sentences (6)' and (7)'.

To explain how this might work in the case of sentence (4)', we need to examine the phenomenon of plural reference, of referring to many things at once. We do so in multitude

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[15] Of course, this is exactly where the debate about how to understand quantifiers rears its head. If they are to be understood as restricted, then we could get the same modal results as we do above. But I do not wish to take a position on this debate here. Sufficed to say that the solution offered here nicely sidesteps having to delve into that conflict at all.

multitude of ways, but the way that interests us, at least with respect to sentence (4)', is the the use of bare plurals. Designating using bare plurals is exemplified in the following sentence:

(13) Dogs are barking.

Notice that we are saying of each dog that it is barking and we simply use the bare plural to group together those dogs in order to say that each of them is barking. This is in contrast with using plurals as generics, which we could do by using this sentence:

(14) Dogs bark.

In this case, we are not referring to each dog and saying of it that it is barking. Rather, we are making a general assertion about the category of dogs and their tendencies. It is not this kind of phenomenon in which we are at present taking an interest.

We can use proper names as bare plurals as well.[16] Consider this sentence:

(15) Franks are studiers.[17]

In this case, we are referring plurally to the Frank's and saying of each of them that they are studiers. Likewise, now that we have evidence that our domain specifiers are indeed devices of reference, we should understand the pronouns in sentences like (4)' as making plural reference to those named 'Frank'. If this is correct, then even though we are picking out a group of individuals, because we are referring to them plurally, we can make assertions about the properties of the members of that plurality. What we have is plural

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[16] We might be tempted to take this as a further piece of evidence that names are not simple devices of reference once again. But, we need not understand the pluralization of a proper names as evidence for the predicative view, so long as we understand the logical form of a plural version of a proper name as a conjunction of individually referring names, and when we have a set of homophones, we simply use the plural for the sake of convenience.

[17] Which of course on the domain specifier view has this structure: Of those named 'Frank': they are studiers'.

reference with distributive predication. Note that we must loosen up our set talk at this point in order to accommodate plural reference. We must say that instead of referring to sets, our domain specifiers actually refer to a plurality, but they still refer nonetheless.[18]

The same reasoning can be applied to sentence (5)' as well. The expression 'one or more' is read as plural, and therefore, whatever we say about sentence (4)' simply carries over to sentence (5)' as well.[19]

In the case of sentences (6)' and (7)', we have a case of picking out a domain that contains only one member. However, once again, we face the same problem as before. Domains cannot be chatterboxes, but individuals can be. And, once again, we will invoke the distinction between distributive and collective predication. Normally, this distinction applies only to pluralities, perhaps surprisingly, however, we can also apply it to singular subjects. For example, a republic can be at war, but can also be divided. If we could not read sentences that refer to singular subjects as either collective or distributive, asserting that the republic is divided would make little sense. Returning to the specific issues being dealt with here, while a domain as a collective object of reference cannot be a chatterbox, given its nature, we do have the option of reading the predication as distributive, as applying to the member of the domain. We can then get the natural interpretations of sentences (6)' and (7)'.

Of course, our example of a predicate distributing in the case of a singular individual

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[18] What to say about pluralities is controversial. Can we understand them ultimately as sets or not is a question that has yet to be settled. See Massamiliano et al (2016).

[19] A sentence like (5)' might also pick out only one individual as well, but the same reading will apply. Here I am explicitly rejecting the claim that only plurals can have distributive readings as claimed by Moltmann (2016). Instead, the collective/distributive reading is understood as the difference between talking about a set as such, and talking about the members of that set.

required us to be discussing different parts of that singular individual. And there are plenty of these kinds of examples, even those that use proper names. Consider the fact that Frank can be dead, but can also be Texas, Ontario, and Alabama. We can say this and read the locational predicates distributively, but only if we are discussing various parts of Frank. We are not doing this when we say, of the Frank I know, that he is a real chatterbox. However, when dealing with singleton sets, there must be some difference between different ways of predicating properties of the set and of the individual within that set. For example, take the country France. As a collective set, it is a republic. But, it is also, as an individual land mass, hexagonal. And we can assert both of these things of France. For example, we can utter

(16) France is a republic and is hexagonal

and convey something meaningful and true. France can be picked out as a collective set and have a property predicated of it collectively, but it can also have predicates predicated of it that distribute over the contents of that set. Likewise, the claim is that when we utter sentences like (6)' or (7)', we are picking out the collective set initially, but we can then go on to predicate a proper of the individual(s) picked out by the domain specifier, in the same way we do when we utter a sentence like (16).

We have now resolved how our domain specifiers can both be referential expressions used to pick out domains, and yet how we can also truly predicate certain properties of the individuals within those domains.[20] We are now in a position to explore the truth conditions for sentences (4)'-(7)'.

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[20] Other resources are also available if one should find this treatment rather messy. We could invoke a Montaguesque conception of predication in which a sentence like (4)' would be true just in case the specified domain, a set of sets of sets, contains only sets of sets that contain the property of being a chatterbox.

5.4 Truth Conditions for Sentences (4)'-(7)'

Now that we have settled how it is possible for our domain specifiers to be about the properties of the individuals within those domains, we can now state the truth conditions for sentences (4)'-(7)' explicitly. On the domain specifier view, the truth condition or semantic value for those sentences involves mapping a domain to the value true or false, either or singularly, and distributively. That is, we can think of our plural distributive and our singular distributive readings as allowing for our pronouns to function as free variables ranging over the individuals of our specified domains. Note that, on this model, no quantification over those individuals in the domain of discourse is ever required. Our pronouns get their values by direct assignment from the domain itself, specified by the antecedent material in our paraphrases of sentences (4)-(7).

To show this, let us specify the truth condition for sentence

(4)' Of those people named ‘Frank’: they were chatterboxes.

To evaluate this sentence for truth, we assign to the now free variable in that sentence each person named ‘Frank’. The sentence is true just in case, for each of these assignments, the individual assigned to the variable is, in fact, a chatterbox. The truth expressed by this sentence is an exhaustive conjunction of a series of singular propositions. While this is, of course, the Tarskian truth condition provided for sentences containing universal quantifiers, clearly, there is another way of mapping a different syntactic construction to the same truth condition that does not rely on a quantifier. Specifically, we can do so if the universe of discourse is explicitly specified by the sentence in question. In other words, while quantified constructions are true only if the previous truth condition holds, it does not follow that if we have the previous truth condition, that we must have a quantified sentence from which it

was derived.[21]

Let us now return to sentence (5)'. As before, we will invoke Tarski's account of the truth conditions for quantified sentences. In this case, we will appeal to the truth condition for existentially quantified sentences, in that sentence (5)' is true just in case at least one or more of these Franks is, in fact, a chatterbox. What sentence (5)' expresses, then, is a series of disjunctive statements about a specific domain of discourse.

Considering now sentences (6)' and (7)' the truth-condition for sentence

(6)' Of a person I know named 'Frank': he is a real chatterbox

has a different form from that which was applied to sentences (4)' and (5)'. This time there is only one individual in the domain, and therefore, we need assign only that one individual as a value to the free variable expressed this time by the pronoun 'he'. This sentence is true, then, only if that person is indeed a chatterbox. The truth expressed is the singular proposition that Frank is a chatterbox, by means of an assignment of a value to a variable. The very same reasoning applies mutatis mutandis to sentence

(7)' Of that person named 'Frank': he is a real chatterbox

as well.

5.6 The Difference between Explicit Domain Specifiers and Quantifiers

Tarski provided us a way to specify the truth conditions of sentences containing quantifiers given a presupposed domain of discourse. What he did not do, however, is prove that such truth conditions are uniquely associated with quantified sentences. Arguably, using quantifiers is an indirect means for getting at Tarski's truth conditions, because they tacitly

[21] This may require rejecting the claim that identical truth conditions entails synonymy. But we already knew that anyway, as the examples of the sentences 'That is trilateral' and 'That is triangular' showed us long ago.

rely on a presupposition about a fixed domain of discourse. Indeed, this fact has led some to offer a context-sensitive account of the quantifiers (VonFintel, 1994). However, when that domain of discourse is made explicit in a sentence, we can apply the Tarskian truth conditions for the quantifiers directly to that sentence with no need to get at them indirectly via a quantifier. This is the fundamental difference between sentences containing explicit domain specifiers and those that merely contain quantifiers.

6. Objections

Of course the domain specifier view, by itself, leaves many questions unanswered. Only a limited number of the potential objections to the view can be addressed here — those that are fairly obvious. We'll now explore these objections to the view.

6.1 The Compositionality Objection

One objection to the domain specifier view is that it does not accurately reflect how we determine the extension of the relevant domain specifiers. For instance, a construction like 'Of those people named 'Frank':' appears to have its extension determined by the meaning of its various parts, and how those parts are combined. But this is not how we determine the extension of a complex device of reference. In determining a complex referential expression's extension, we completely ignore its internal structure. To return to an earlier example, consider Kripke's example of the name 'The Holy Roman Empire'. As Kripke (1980) points out, it simply does not follow that because The Holy Roman Empire is so-called that it is holy, Roman, or an empire. An expression that counts as a referential expression a la Kripke does not determine its referent through complex compositional operations, and yet, this seems to be true of our domain specifiers.

The objection appears even stronger when we consider the fact that the more

complex the conditions become for membership in a domain of discourse, the more complex the domain specifier itself will become. Consider this sentence:

> (17) All Franks who brought pencils to class passed the exam, and were happy about it.

On the domain specifier approach, sentence (17) becomes

> (17)' Of those people named ‘Frank’ who brought pencils to class: they passed the exam, and they were really happy about it.

As sentence (17) illustrates, language permits very complicated domain specifiers, and the current hypothesis is that all of these sorts of specifiers produce complex referential expressions in the Kripkean sense invoked here, expressions whose extension is not determined compositionally. Consideration of sentences like (17)', however, illustrate that this is just not plausible.

One avenue open to the domain specifier theorist is to maintain that determining the referent of an expression is one thing, its semantic value or content, is another. Kripke addresses this issue with his concept of fixing the referent of a name, which can take a variety of forms, including the use of a complex expression with a compositionally determined meaning. To return to an earlier example, reconsider the name ‘The Holy Roman Empire’. Suppose that originally the empire called by that name was so-called because of its actually being a holy Roman empire. The name got its reference fixed by using an expression with a compositionally determined meaning. However, thereafter, that meaning no longer served as the content of the complex expression ‘The Holy Roman Empire’. Instead, its meaning became atomic, and designated the Holy Roman Empire whether it was holy, Roman, or an empire.

The domain specifier theorist might say, then, that the very same phenomenon

characterizes what is occurring when we use domain specifiers like those contained in sentences (4)'-(7)'. While initially, those domain specifiers may function compositionally to determine their extensions, thereafter, they function as complex referring expressions in the Kripkean sense. That is, even though we once fixed the referent by relying on a compositional analysis of the domain specifiers occurring in sentences (4)'-(7)', we need not be committed to that compositional analysis being an essential part of the subsequent semantic content of those domain specifiers. That analysis plays merely a pragmatic, rather than a semantic role.

But now, how do we explain our obviously compositional analysis of the truth conditions of sentences (4)'-(7)'? The answer is that while the domain might be fixed compositionally, and thereafter referred to in a non-compositional way, once we have that domain, we can do with it what we wish. The truth conditions for our sentences (4)'-(7)' are not determined by the compositional nature of the domain specifier. Instead, it is what follows the domain specifiers in the paraphrases that determines that we must rely on the truth conditions that we do in assessing those sentences for truth.

6.2 The Slippery Slope Objection

Our next objection asks for a motivation for treating only names in a predicative position as domain specifiers. If there is no such motivation, then there is nothing stopping us from applying the domain specifier view to all common nouns.[22] For example, consider this sentence:

(18) All whales are mammals.

As it stands, there is nothing preventing use from rendering sentence (18) as the following:

[22] Thanks to Gabriel Segal for bringing this to my attention.

(18)' Of those individuals called ‘whales’: they are all mammals.

Surely sentence (18)' is implausible as an analysis of sentence (18), and therefore the view presented here is implausible as well.

But the domain specifier view is not committed to sentence (18)' as an analysis of sentence (18). There is, in fact, a reason to treat sentences (4)-(7) differently than sentence (18); by anyone’s measure, names are not mere common nouns like any other common noun. For example, even the predicativist recognizes that names play different syntactic roles in the language than other common nouns, such as occurring in the argument position of sentences without an explicit quantifier. Because there are these differences, there is no reason to think that the domain specifier view applies to all common nouns, since names are not like all other common nouns in the first place, or if you are a referentialist, are not even common nouns at all. In cases like these, it is appropriate to extract such “properties” from their predicative position, make their metalinguistic nature explicit, and to locate them in a domain specifier position, unlike standard common nouns.

Another variant on the previous objection is to appeal only to constructions embedding names.[23] Consider, for instance, this sentence:

(19) Frank is happy.

The previous response just offered will not apply in this case due to its containing a proper name. On the current view, then, there is no reason not to reinterpret sentence (19) as this sentence

(19)' Of that person called ‘Frank’: he is happy.

The response strategy, in this case, is to point out that when there are no quantifiers

[23] Thanks to Angel Pinillos for bringing this to my attention.

present in certain sentences, like sentence (19), there is nothing to trigger reinterpreting it as expressing what (19)' expresses, thereby avoiding the implausible result that sentences like (19) ought to be reinterpreted into sentences like (19)'. Remember, after all, that we are offering an analysis of 'All Franks' and its kin, not of 'Frank' the name, so not only is there a response to this objection, it misses its mark at any rate.

6.3 The Return of the Predicativist Objection

As previously asserted, we are to understand the offered paraphrases as analytically related to their original versions. This leads to the natural question of whether all that has been done is to have offered yet another predicativist account of proper names. The line of reasoning here is as follows: since, on the domain specifier view, the occurrence of 'Franks' in a sentence like

(4) All Franks are real chatterboxes

is understood as having the same meaning as the phrase 'Of those people named 'Frank':', we have simply offered a meta-linguistic understanding of the use of 'Frank' in quantified constructions that is still, at bottom, predicative, since being a person named 'Frank' is itself an attribute, a meta-linguistic attribute perhaps, but an attribute nonetheless.

However, the previous objection rests on two separate mistakes. Correspondingly, there are two separate responses to this objection.

The first response notes that the previous line of reasoning simply ignores the fact that the current semantic account has it that the instances of domain specification in sentences (4)'-(7)' are instances of non-compositionally determined devices of reference. Analyzing the domain specifiers in (4)'-(7)' as expressing attributes, then, is just to misunderstand the proposal. The offered paraphrases do not give a compositional analysis

of the complex constructions containing proper names in the original sentences (4)-(7) at all.

Furthermore, to revisit a point made earlier, one of the assumptions of the previous objection is that the domain specifiers in sentences (4)'-(7)' are analyses of the meanings of the names occurring in sentences (4)-(7). But this is simply false. The domain specifiers are intended as analyses of names coupled with a quantifier. There is no semantic one-to-one correspondence between the names in the original constructions and in the offered paraphrases. Complex phrases like ‘Of those people named ‘Frank’:’ are intended to be equivalent in meaning to the complex phrase ‘All Franks’. Since we are rejecting the idea that names can combine with quantifiers in the same manner as predicates can, we must make sense of the entire complex ‘All Franks’, not simply part of that complex. The domain specifier analysis is not offering a theory of the semantic value of a proper name; it is not offering a theory of the meaning of ‘Frank’ in the complex phrase ‘All Franks’ at all.

6.4 The Indeterminacy of Reference Objection

The last objection concerns the fact that in the case of sentences like (5) and its paraphrastic version (5)’, there is no way to get a determinate domain of discourse to which the relevant domain specifier could refer, given that the domain specifier itself does not specify a specific set, but rather a range of sets. However, we can still believe that there is a fact of the matter about which specific domain is at issue in uttering a sentence like (5)’. We can suppose that while the domain specifier itself is indeterminate, it is merely epistemically indeterminate. Again, we can rely on some resources from Kripke. We can think of domain specifiers that refer to one or more individuals as akin to a Kripke-style descriptive name in that they refer to a specific domain in any given instance, even if we are not acquainted with

that domain; the entire purpose of a descriptive name is to allow us to refer to something with which we are acquainted only by description, without knowing which individual satisfies it. Likewise, a domain specifier that is non-specific with respect to how many individuals are contained therein allows us to refer to a domain by description without knowing which individuals might fit that description.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, The domain specifier view is a defensible view of many of the predicative uses of proper names. If it is correct, we can now begin to move on from one of the current controversies concerning the correct semantic analysis of proper names, and explore fresh alternatives.[24]

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