The Modified Predicate Theory of Proper Names

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1. Introduction

In his (1973), Tyler Burge argues for what he calls the 'modified predicate view' of proper names – the view that proper names are predicates in their own right. The view contrasts with the traditional predicate view according to which a name is an abbreviated or manufactured predicate; and it contrasts with the rather more popular view that names have the semantical role of individual constants.[1] The modified predicate view is constituted by three central theses:

> (T1) A proper name is a predicate true of an object if and only if the object was given that name in an appropriate way. (Burge 1973, p. 428)
>
> (T2) Proper names in singular unmodified form, functioning as singular terms, involve a demonstrative element. (Burge 1973, p. 432)
>
> (T3) A proper name occurring as a singular term in a sentence used by a person at a time designates an object if and only if the person refers to that object at that time with that proper name, and the proper name is true of that object. (Burge 1973, p. 435)

Burge is concerned primarily with the logical role of proper names in a semantical account of natural languages; his chosen framework is Tarskian truth theory[2] as applied to the sentences of a

person at a time; and he states as a condition of adequacy on any such semantical account 'that the theory of truth be *fully formalized* – that is, that the sense and reference (if any) of every expression of the theory should be unambiguously determinable from its form' (Burge 1973, pp. 425-6). This means that while context can be relied upon to determine the referent of a particular occurrence of an indexical, demonstrative or ambiguous expression in the object-language, the meta-language must be free from such context-dependence: it must instead provide an *analysis* of the role context plays in the object-language and be free from ambiguity.[3]

With this much as background, Burge's modified predicate view has three clear virtues. First, the view provides a unified treatment of both singular and non-singular uses of proper names. Names are accorded the same semantical role whether in singular, unmodified form – as exemplified by 'Alfred' in (1)[4]:

(1) Alfred studies in Princeton.

– or in plural or modified form – as exemplified by 'Alfred' in (2)-(5):

(2) There are relatively few Alfreds in Princeton.

(3) An Alfred Russell joined the club today.

(4) The Alfred who joined the club today was a baboon.

(5) Some Alfreds are crazy; some are sane.

The unified treatment is made possible by treating non-singular uses of proper names as semantically primary and singular uses as semantically derivative – as is indicated by (T1) and

(T2) respectively. This seems to go against the common intuition that singular uses of proper names are more fundamental than non-singular uses. However, the common intuition can be accommodated by understanding it as an expression of the *pragmatic* or *epistemic* primacy of singular uses of proper names. And the pragmatic or epistemic primacy of singular uses is of course consistent with the *semantic* primacy of non-singular uses. On this understanding, non-singular uses of proper names display their logical form on their sleeves, so to speak, whereas singular uses of proper names do not. Singular uses such as 'Alfred' as it occurs in (1) are to be understood as semantically equivalent to demonstrative expressions such as 'that Alfred', and hence as falling within the same semantic category as explicit demonstrative-predicate constructions such as 'that cat'. Proper names in all their uses, then, are predicates. A unified treatment of proper names such as that afforded by the modified predicate view is virtuous because it explains the obvious connection between singular and non-singular uses of names. This is illustrated by the intuitive validity of inferences of the following kinds:

(6) Alfred Jones lives in Princeton, so there is at least one Alfred living in Princeton.

(7) Alfreds tend to be over 50, so Alfred Jones is probably over 50.

(6) involves a move from a singular to a non-singular use of a proper name, and (7) relies on a move from a non-singular to a singular use of a proper name. As such, the validity of each inference relies on there being a semantic connection between singular and non-singular uses of a given proper name. In the absence of such a semantic connection the intuitive validity of the inferences would be inexplicable.[5]

The second virtue of the theory – and one that is, in a sense to be made clear, related to the first virtue – is that it allows for unrestricted quantification over individuals who share a name. In essence, the view assigns the correct truth-conditions to sentences containing plural occurrences of names such as (2) and (5) above as well as (8) and (9) below[6]:

(8) There will be many Alfreds next century.

(9) There are many Alfreds to whom I shall never effect singular reference.

A correct understanding of such sentences depends upon understanding that the plural use of 'Alfred' in each case concerns *all* Alfreds including those who are either not known to the speaker or known to the speaker but not by that name. The sentences are not correctly understood, for example, as concerning merely the set of individuals called 'Alfred' by the speaker. Indeed, (9) is barely intelligible on such an understanding. As Hornsby says: 'The set of Alfreds an individual calls by name is most likely a proper subset of the extension of the predicate "Alfred", but to use the name correctly predicatively he must know that anything which is called "Alfred", even something quite unknown to him, is an Alfred' (Hornsby 1976, p. 233).

The third virtue of the theory is that it meets the stated condition of adequacy. A name is strictly true of many individuals – all those given that name in an appropriate way – and which individual is referred to by a singular use of a name will depend on context in just the same way as the referent of a use of a demonstrative expression will depend on context. In order that the condition of adequacy be met, this context-dependence of the object-language cannot be carried over into the meta-language, since this would yield a theory of truth that was not fully

formalized; but the context-dependence of the object-language can be accounted for in the meta-language by means of a set of reference clauses that determine which object is referred to by a singular use of a name by a speaker at a time, as follows:

> (x)(y)(Reference (x), & By(x,p) & At(x,t) & With(x, 'Aristotle$_1$', 'Aristotle is human') & To(x,y) → ('Aristotle is human' is true with respect to p at t ↔ Human ([y] Aristotle (y))))
>
> Read: For all x and y, if x is an act of reference by person p at time t to y with the first occurrence of 'Aristotle' in 'Aristotle is human', then 'Aristotle is human' is true with respect to p at t just in case the object which is y and is an Aristotle is human. (Burge, 1973, p. 433)

In this paper – and against the background of these three virtues – I defend the modified predicate view. In section 2, I rehearse briefly the arguments that favour the modified predicate view over both the traditional predicate view and the individual constant view. In section 3, I consider a series of objections that have been levelled against the modified predicate view and argue that none is successful. Finally, in section 4, I outline two further benefits of the view: one concerning the prospects for a unified treatment of singular thought; the other concerning Kripke's puzzle about belief. I conclude briefly in section 5.

2. The alternatives

The modified predicate view is to be distinguished from the traditional predicate view according to which a name is a definite description. There are three main versions of the traditional

predicate view. The first is the Russellian view according to which a name abbreviates a complex definite description: thus 'Aristotle' is taken to be semantically equivalent to a definite description such as 'the pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great'.[7] The second is the Quinean view according to which a name is a definite description involving a manufactured predicate: thus, 'Aristotle' is taken to be semantically equivalent to 'the aristotelizer'.[8] According to the third, meta-linguistic version, a name is taken to be a meta-linguistic definite description: thus 'Aristotle' is taken to be semantically equivalent to 'the individual named "Aristotle"'.[9] As Burge points out, each version of the traditional predicate view violates intuition on a number of counts: (i) the Russellian version violates the intuition that names do not describe the objects they name; (ii) all three versions render names incomplete symbols and thereby violate the intuition that names play the semantical and grammatical role of singular terms; and (iii) all three versions violate the intuition that some sentences that involve failures of designation are neither true nor false. The modified predicate view, in contrast, can accommodate all three of these intuitions. Although names are predicates, the only descriptive content they have is that the individuals of which a given name is true bear that name, which is uncontroversial. Second, names in their singular use (being demonstrative-predicate expressions) remain singular terms semantically and grammatically.[10] Finally, the view allows for sentences containing singular terms that fail to designate an object to be neither true nor false, as can be seen by (T3).[11] Moreover, the modified predicate view can explain how names can be used to designate their bearers rigidly, whereas no version of the traditional predicate view can[12]. If a singular unmodified use of a name is a complex demonstrative, then it will rigidly designate the object it designates in virtue of containing an implicit demonstrative which designates rigidly. The

definite article, in contrast, does not designate rigidly, and hence neither does a complex term that consists of the definite article and a predicate.[13]

But there is a more fundamental concern with the traditional predicate view: each version falls foul of one of the three virtues identified in section 1. I will start by looking at the manufactured predicate view and the meta-linguistic predicate view, both of which fail to satisfy the formal adequacy requirement. If a name is semantically equivalent to a definite description, then its predicative element must be uniquely satisfied if it is to denote an individual. However, manufactured predicates such as 'aristotelizer' and meta-linguistic predicates such as 'individual named "Aristotle"' are general terms that are not uniquely satisfied. Consequently, context must determine which individual a use of a name refers to on a given occasion. This reliance on context is appropriate in the object-language, but in the meta-language there must be no such reliance on context if the condition of adequacy is to be met. However, if names are definite descriptions involving either manufactured or meta-linguistic predicates, then there is no way to provide the required analysis in the meta-language of the role context plays in determining singular reference. The modified predicate view has the resources to yield an analysis of context in the meta-language, and hence has the resources to satisfy the condition of adequacy, because it treats singular occurrences of names as involving a demonstrative element which is explicit at the level of logical form. These versions of the traditional predicate view, in contrast, make no allowance for context in the logical form of a name but instead treat a singular occurrence of a name as referring to an individual *independent* of context and hence neither require nor allow room for a context-dependence in the meta-language. This means that neither the second nor the third version of the traditional predicate view satisfies the condition of adequacy. The concern here arises from combining two factors: (i) a name is a definite description, and (ii) the

predicative element of a definite description which is semantically abbreviated by a name is not uniquely satisfied.[14]

Insofar as the Russellian view accepts (i) and (ii) it is subject to the same concern. The most natural interpretation of the Russellian view, however, rejects (ii) and insists instead that the predicative element of a genuine name be itself uniquely satisfied. As such, the Russellian account satisfies the condition of adequacy but faces a dilemma in virtue of the insistence that the predicative element of a name be uniquely satisfied: either it cannot provide a unified account of singular and predicative uses of names, or it cannot allow for unrestricted quantification over individuals who share a name. Both the manufactured predicate view and the meta-linguistic predicate view can accommodate the predicative use of names in a straightforward fashion precisely because the predicates 'aristotelizes' and 'individual named "Aristotle"' can be true of many individuals, even individuals unknown to the speaker (as can 'is an Aristotle'). Singular uses can then be seen as derived from predicative uses by involving the same predicative element and coupling it with the definite article. In contrast, the Russellian view under consideration treats each singular occurrence of 'Aristotle' as abbreviating a definite description involving a complex predicate that is true of only one individual. This leaves only a superficial connection between the term 'Aristotle' as it applies to Aristotle the ancient philosopher, the term 'Aristotle' as it applies to the neighbour's cat, and so on. In effect, names must be construed as multiply ambiguous expressions. But if names are multiply ambiguous expressions – to be disambiguated in the meta-language in order to meet the condition of adequacy – then there is no sense to be made of quantification over individuals who *share* a name, since no two individuals *do* share a name. There is then no account of non-singular uses of proper names, and hence no unified account of singular and non-singular uses of proper names.

It might be thought that this objection could be overcome by treating non-singular uses of a proper name by a speaker at a time as constructed from the set of singular uses of same-sounding names available to that speaker at that time. The basis of the construction would have to be restricted in this way to singular uses of same-sounding names by a speaker at a time since the relevant complex predicates involved in the uses of same-sounding names by *every* speaker would outstrip the semantic knowledge of any individual speaker and hence could not be employed in stating a truth-theory for that speaker at that time. However, the necessary restriction of the construction base would render the quantificational domain of plural occurrences of names different for each individual speaker and different from the intuitively correct domain, which is not restricted in this way. Consequently, the Russellian view that treats predicative occurrences of names as constructed from the set of same-sounding names available to a speaker at a time can provide a unified treatment of proper names if and only if it assigns incorrect truth-conditions to sentences containing plural and modified uses of proper names. The difference between intuitive truth-conditions and those assigned to utterances by the theory is brought out particularly well by sentences such as (9). A speaker uttering (9) intuitively says something coherent and true. However, if a non-singular use of a proper name by a speaker at a time is assumed to be constructed from the set of same-sounding singular names available to her, then (9) must be assigned truth-conditions which render any given utterance of it false, and will portray the speaker as verging on incoherence. Effectively, (9) as uttered by S at t would be true just in case the set of Alfreds to whom S can effect singular reference at t (because S has a proper name for each of them at t) contains a significant proportion of Alfreds to whom S will never effect singular reference (because she will never have a proper name for them). To avoid this unwelcome consequence, a non-singular use of a proper name by a speaker at a time would have

to be treated as entirely distinct from any proper names conceived as singular. On this understanding, (6) and (7) would involve invalid inferences. The view in any case has an artificiality about it since there is no rationale for quantifying over individuals who share a same-sounding name other than by implicit assumption that names that sound the same form a semantic type, which comes close to an admission that names are at root predicates.

The discussion of the traditional predicate view has been complex. One way to understand the fundamental problems facing the traditional predicate view is in terms of a dilemma. Either singular reference is made possible in the object-language by the definite article in conjunction with context, in which case the theory fails to satisfy the condition of adequacy that the theory be fully formalized, or singular reference is made possible by the predicative element of the definite description, in which case there is no unified account of singular and predicative uses of names that yields the correct quantificational domain for predicative uses.

Let us then move to a consideration of the individual constants view. In contrast to the traditional predicate view, the view that proper names have the semantical role of individual constants has gained wide-spread support – largely in the form of Millianism, according to which names contribute the objects they denote to propositions expressed by sentences containing them.[15] The Millian view (just like the Russellian view) has to treat names as ambiguous in the object-language and index the names in the truth-theory in order to eradicate the ambiguity at that level. Since the semantic value of a name is the object to which it refers, and hence understanding a name consists in knowing its referent, the individual constants view is committed to a specification in the truth-theory of the referent of each of the indexed names.[16]

As Burge points out, the view has certain immediate drawbacks. First, the number of denotation rules required for any given name is vast in comparison to the single satisfaction rule

and set of primitive demonstrative reference clauses required by the modified predicate view. Second, 'the truth-theorist for the idiolect of a person at a time would be presented with the awesome task of actually tracking down and specifying each of the individuals that a person knows' (Burge, 1973, p. 438). Moreover, the Millian view faces the same dilemma as the Russellian version of the traditional predicate view: if a truth-theory for a speaker at a time contained an axiom for each of the distinct individuals for whom the speaker had a name at that time, then the theory would either fail to provide a unified treatment of proper names, or be unable to accommodate quantification over unnamed or unknown individuals.

The concern here is not confined to Millianism but applies more generally to any version of the logical constants view of proper names. For example, consider Larson and Segal's version of the individual constants view which incorporates a certain predicative element.[17] According to their view, which they call 'FLIC' (the Free Logic/Individual Concepts view), the axioms in the truth-theory for a speaker at a time would have the following form:

(x)(x satisfies 'Boris Karloff' iff x=Boris Karloff)

(x)(x satisfies 'Aristotle1' iff x=Aristotle 1 (the philosopher))

(x)(x satisfies 'Aristotle2' iff x=Aristotle 2 (the magnate))

Although the theory has some benefits over the Millian view – most notably by being able to offer a straightforward account of intensional contexts and empty terms – it faces the same dilemma as the Millian view (and the Russellian view) in virtue of resolving a perceived ambiguity in names by indexing them in the truth-theory. If non-singular uses of a name are to be semantically connected to singular uses, where the singular uses are conceived as primary – as

they must be on any individual constants view – then the quantificational domain of non-singular uses will be inappropriately restricted.

To illustrate the general nature of the concern, consider Steven Boer's attempt to provide a unified account of names that takes the singular use rather than the predicative use as primary[18] (Boer does not himself endorse the view):

> (LC1) X is the *referent* of 'Alfred' in (1) iff X uniquely satisfies the identity-criterion which the utterer of (1) associates on that occasion with the use of 'Alfred' in (1).
> (LC2) X is *in the extension* of 'Alfred' in (2)-(5) if and only if the generalized intersection of the sets of identity-critera which the utterer of (2)-(5) associates with different singular-term-uses of 'Alfred' provides a criterion satisfied by X. (Boer, 1974, p. 395)

The predicative use of 'Alfred' is here defined in terms of the referential (i.e. singular) use of 'Alfred'. Boer goes on to say:

> If the speaker's identity-criteria for various singular-term-uses of 'Alfred' agree only in requiring that the referent should have gotten the name 'Alfred' in some appropriate way, the generalized intersection of such criteria will provide the single requirement that an entity is in the extension of 'Alfred' *qua* predicate just in case that entity got the name 'Alfred' in some appropriate way. Hence all of Burge's examples would be accounted for. (Boer, 1974, p. 395)

However, while the account suggested by Boer does provide a unified account of proper names, it do so only by assigning incorrect truth-conditions to sentences containing names used predicatively. On this view, the extension of a speaker's use of 'Alfred' is the set of Alfreds for whom the speaker has associated identity-criteria rather than the set of Alfreds *simpliciter*. The problem arises precisely because of the construction of predicative uses from singular uses, and it is in virtue of this that any theory that treats singular uses of names as primary will be inadequate.

I have argued that the Russellian view and the individual constants view face a dilemma: either sentences containing names used predicatively are assigned incorrect truth-conditions or names used predicatively are semantically unconnected to singular uses. The modified predicate view escapes the dilemma in virtue of treating predicative uses of names as primary and truly general: names are predicates that apply to all individuals who bear the name. More broadly, the only view that possesses all three virtues identified in section 1 is the modified predicate view.

3. Objections to the modified predicate view

In this section I focus on a series of objections that have not yet been responded to in the literature.[19] According to the modified predicate view, names are predicates. As such, names can be true of many distinct individuals. And yet a name can on an occasion be used to refer to just one individual. Such singular reference is made possible by the presence of an implicit determiner in each singular unmodified use of a name. According to Burge – as stated in (T2) – the implicit determiner is to be understood as a bare demonstrative.[20] If this is right, then (10) and (11) are semantically equivalent:

(10) Mary had fish for lunch.

(11) That Mary had fish for lunch.

James Higginbotham has objected to this alleged semantic equivalence on the grounds that different truth-conditions are to be assigned to (10) and (11)[21]. He writes: 'On seeing a woman emerge from the seafood restaurant, and taking her for my friend Mary, I might volunteer either [(10)] or [(11)]. Suppose that the woman is *a* Mary, but not my friend Mary. Then [(11)] is true if the woman had fish for lunch, but [(10)] is not verified thereby.' (Higginbotham, 1988, p. 36)

The objection has led Gabriel Segal to suggest that if names are predicates, the implicit determiner involved in a singular use of a proper name ought to be understood as the definite article rather than as a demonstrative.[22] According to this proposed modification, 'Alfred' in its singular use is to be understood as equivalent to 'the Alfred' rather than, as Burge suggests, 'that Alfred'. According to Segal this version of the predicate view avoids Higginbotham's objection. Segal goes on to say:

> If the implicit determiner is 'the' then it is probably a referential 'the'. That would be the simplest and most natural explanation of the genuinely referential nature of proper names … . [The view] thus fits best with an ambiguity theory of the definite article, holding that while 'the' sometimes functions as a quantifier, it can also work as a kind of demonstrative, much like 'this' and 'that'. (Segal, 2001, p. 551)

However, if the proposal is to treat the definite article as a demonstrative whenever it plays the role of the implicit determiner in a singular use of a name, it is unclear why the implicit

determiner shouldn't rather be treated as a straightforward demonstrative. Moreover, the suggestion that the implicit determiner be the definite article understood referentially opens itself up to Higginbotham's objection. Since the only evidence Segal offers in favour of preferring the definite article over the demonstrative as the implicit determiner is to avoid Higginbotham's objection and since the demonstrative version is simpler Burge's original proposal is to be preferred.[23]

It remains, then, to address Higginbotham's objection. Higginbotham is right that in the scenario he describes (10) and (11) might differ in truth-value. However, this is consistent with the claim that they are semantically equivalent. Let us sharpen the scenario to explain why. Let us call the known Mary 'Mary K' and the Mary seen exiting the seafood restaurant 'Mary S'. Further, let us assume that Mary K did not have fish for lunch while Mary S did. In such a scenario an utterance of (10) would be false while an utterance of (11) would be true. This is because Mary K is the referent of 'Mary' in (10) while Mary S is the referent of 'That Mary' in (11). Higginbotham's objection assumes that this difference in reference implies a semantic difference. However, there is an alternative explanation for the difference in reference that is consistent with the claim that names are predicates with a demonstrative element in their singular use. It is commonplace to note that a demonstrative utterance can be true in one context and false in another even though there is no semantic difference between them – the difference in truth-value being due entirely to a difference in context of utterance. Higginbotham's case, however, is a case where the context of utterance for (10) and (11) is assumed to be the same. If the context of utterance for (10) and (11) are identical and yet the truth-values differ, the difference must be due to a difference in semantic content. Hence Higginbotham's conclusion.

However, there is an alternative explanation for the difference in truth-value consistent with identity of both semantic content and context of utterance. Because the demonstrative element in (10) is left implicit, the name is best understood as referring to the Mary who is *conversationally* most salient, which may not be the Mary who is *perceptually* most salient. In contrast, the demonstrative element in (11), being explicit, has the effect that the expression 'That Mary' is best understood as referring to the Mary who is *perceptually* most salient. Note that if an utterance of (10) were accompanied by a nod of the head towards Mary S, it would also concern Mary S and hence be true. The nod of the head here would have the effect that the explicit demonstrative does in (11). In general, the demonstrative element in a singular use of a name will determine a different referent depending on whether it is left implicit or made explicit. One way to put this is to say that which contextual features of an utterance are relevant to determining the referent of the singular use of a proper name will be determined in part by whether the demonstrative element is left implicit or made explicit. As a result, the mere fact that (10) and (11) differ in truth-value does not imply that they differ semantically even if the context of utterance is taken to be the same.

A second objection to the modified predicate view has been raised by Segal.[24] Segal argues that singular uses of proper names do not function like ordinary determiner-predicate constructions, which casts doubt on the hypothesis that names are predicates. Thus consider the following:

(12) a. That Churchland argued for materialism.

b. Churchland argued for materialism.

c. That philosopher argued for materialism.

d. *Philosopher argued for materialism.

According to Segal, the sentences in (12) illustrate that the determiner in a [determiner [name]] construction can be dropped, whereas dropping the determiner from a [determiner [common noun]] construction renders a sentence ungrammatical.

More precisely, Segal claims that if there is an implicit determiner involved in the singular use of a proper name then first, there must be special rules about when it can be dropped, and second, there must be special rules about when it can appear. Segal offers two examples to establish his claim. The first example runs as follows. In response to the question 'Where do you live' posed in a context in which 'London' would naturally be interpreted as London, England, (13a) would be appropriate whereas (13b) would 'sound bizarre' (Segal, 2001, p. 561):

(13) a. I live in London.

b. ??I live in that London.

In contrast, (13b) would be appropriate if uttered in a context in which London Ontario is not out of the question and the speaker could point out of the window of the plane or point at the location on a map.

Second, consider the following sentences:

(14) a. This is that John I mentioned yesterday.

b. *This is John I mentioned yesterday.

(14a) is grammatical, whereas (14b) is not.[25]

It would seem that it is sometimes inappropriate to make the hidden determiner explicit (as in (13b)), and sometimes ungrammatical to leave the implicit determiner implicit (as in (14b)). As Segal says, if there is a hidden determiner involved in a singular use of a proper name there must be 'special rules governing when it can appear on the surface and when it cannot' (Segal, 2001, p. 561).

Borrowing from the proposed solution to Higginbotham's objection, here is a first pass at the special rules.

> (R1) If the conversational context is such that the referent of a singular use of a name would be evident without an accompanying demonstration, then the implicit determiner should not be made explicit.
>
> (R2) If the conversational context is such that the referent of a singular use of a name would not be evident without an accompanying demonstration, then a demonstration should be provided, whether or not the implicit determiner is made explicit.

Example (13) is explained by (R1), and example (14) is explained by (R2). Finally, although (12a) and (12b) should be understood as grammatical and as semantically equivalent, each will be appropriate in different circumstances: (12a) would be appropriate if both Paul and Patricia Churchland were conversationally salient, but (12b) would be appropriate if only Paul Churchland, for instance, were. This is, I think, how the sentences are most naturally read.[26]

Finally, let us turn to four considerations against the modified predicate view offered by Jeff King.[27] King's first and second considerations are offered as evidence for the claim that

singular uses of names differ semantically from predicative uses of names and hence that names are not predicates in all their uses. His first consideration relies on the claim that singular and predicative uses fall into different syntactic categories: names function as noun phrases in their singular use and count nouns in their predicative use. This is reflected, he claims, in the different proforms in each of the following[28]:

(12) Many Jeff Kings live in LA and Oriana knows one of them.

(13) Jeff King lives in LA and Oriana knows him.

However, this consideration begs the question against the modified predicate view by assuming that the grammatical subject of (13) is a bare name and not a complex demonstrative. According to the modified predicate view 'Jeff King' as it occurs in (13) functions as a predicate and a count noun, just as it does in (12). Syntactically, 'Jeff King' in (13) is analogous to 'that man' in (14):

(14) That man lives in LA and Oriana knows him.

Consequently, an alleged semantic difference cannot be grounded in an alleged syntactic difference: both differences would be rejected by the modified predicate theorist.

Second, King claims that singular and predicative uses of names have different modal profiles. Consider the following two sentences:

(15) Doug Stanley lacks a name. That's false but it might have been true.

(16) Every Doug Stanley lacks a name. That's false but it might have been true.

King claims that intuitively the second sentence of (15) is true whereas the second sentence of (16) is false. Unfortunately he does not explain his intuition, which I do not share. Intuitively, I would maintain, the second sentence of (16) is also true. As yet, then, there is no reason to think that singular and predicative uses of names differ in their modal profile and hence fall into different semantic categories.

King's third and fourth considerations are intended to discredit the claim that names in their singular use involve an implicit determiner. According to King, (17) is grammatical while (18) is not:

(17) That Glenn Bunting is happy but this one isn't.

(18) *Glenn Bunting is happy but this one isn't.

This contrasts with (19) and (20), both of which are grammatical:

(19) Dogs are kind.

(20) Dogs are kind but this one isn't.

The fact that (19) and (20) are grammatical supports the claim that generic count nouns are fronted by an implicit determiner, whereas the fact that (18) is ungrammatical tells against the claim that names in their singular use are fronted by an implicit determiner. However, the

example is of the same kind as Segal's examples discussed above and is to be explained in a similar fashion by invoking rules (R1) and (R2).[29]

King's final argument against the modified predicate view concerns designation. He claims that 'a "bare" (singular) name in subject position can designate a particular individual in the extension of the name qua count noun' (King 2006, p. 149), whereas other count nouns cannot designate particular individuals in their extension. The difference is brought out by the following:

(21) Sarah Sawyer lives in Sussex.

(22) Dog is kind.

The term 'Sarah Sawyer' as it occurs in (21) can be used, according to King, to designate a particular Sarah Sawyer, but the term 'dog' in (21) cannot be used to designate a particular dog.

There are two steps to the response here. First, a "bare" (singular) name in subject position cannot *on its own* designate a particular individual in its extension. Names do not designate their bearers; they are *true of* their bearers. Designation is a complex relation consisting of the *true of* relation, which is semantic, and speaker reference, which is pragmatic. Thus 'Sarah Sawyer' as it occurs in (21) does not designate an individual any more than 'dog' in (22) does. There is a still a disanalogy between (21) and (22) because a speaker can refer to a particular individual by the use of a bare singular name, whereas a speaker cannot refer to an individual by the use of any other kind of predicate except by adding an explicit demonstrative, as in 'that dog'. However, the disanalogy can now be seen merely as an instance of the disanalogy identified by Segal above: the determiner that accompanies a singular use of a name

can be left implicit while the determiner that accompanies the singular use of any other kind of predicate cannot. And once again, that is to be explained by (R1) and (R2).

No doubt there is more to be said. However, if the demonstrative element in a singular use of a name can determine a different referent depending on whether it is left implicit or made explicit, then the modified predicate view of names can withstand Higginbotham's objection; if something like (R1) and (R2) are correct, then the modified predicate view of names can withstand Segal's objection and King's objections.

4. Two benefits of the modified predicate view

The modified predicate view has two further advantages: first, it promises a unified account of singular (*de re*) thought; second it offers a straightforward solution to Kripke's puzzle about belief. I will consider each advantage in turn.

There is an intuitive distinction between thoughts that are *de re* – ones that relate a thinker to an object directly – and thoughts that are *de dicto* – ones that relate a thinker to an object if at all only indirectly. *De re* thoughts are generally thought to be expressed by sentences that contain either demonstratives or singular uses of proper names. A unified semantic treatment of demonstratives and proper names, then, would provide a unified account of *de re* thought by providing an explanation as to why sentences containing these two kinds of expressions are alike in expressing *de re* thoughts.

Demonstratives and proper names are typically given different semantic treatments – demonstratives are treated as determining a referent only relative to a context, whereas names are treated as singular terms and hence as determining a referent independently of an application in a context. If a unified semantic treatment of demonstratives and names is to be forthcoming, then,

either demonstratives will need to be treated as context-independent or proper names will need to be treated as context-dependent. The first option is explored by Evans and McDowell.[30] The second option emerges naturally from the modified predicate view of names. This is the option I will urge here.

Consider the following two sentences:

(23) That book is tatty.

(24) The oldest book is tatty.

An utterance of (23) by a subject S1 is naturally taken to express a *de re* belief, while an utterance of (24) by that subject is naturally taken to express a *de dicto* belief. The difference is plausibly due to the presence of a demonstrative in the first utterance and a definite description in the second. One way to represent (23) and (24) that does justice to the difference is by (25) and (26) respectively[31]:

(25) Br (S1, <b1>, ⌜x is tatty⌝)

(26) Bd (S1, ⌜the oldest book is tatty⌝)

In this notation, 'Br' represents that the subject has a *de re* belief, and 'Bd' that the subject has a *de dicto* belief. The pointed brackets in the *de re* case mark out the object or objects the belief is about[32], and serve to indicate that it is the object or objects themselves which are of importance, rather than any description of them. There is no equivalent in the representation of a *de dicto* attribution. The corner quotes, in contrast, denote the proposition (in the *de dicto* case) or

propositional fragment (in the *de re* case) expressed by the terms enclosed. (25) and (26) embody a certain conception of the *de re* / *de dicto* distinction: *de re* attributions relate the subject in part to an incomplete proposition expressed by an open sentence and in part to a *res*, whereas *de dicto* attributions relate the subject to a complete proposition, expressed by a closed sentence; and *de re* thoughts are those which require a non-conceptual contextual relation to determine the object or objects they are about, whereas *de dicto* thoughts are those which are fully conceptualized. This conception fits well with our understanding of demonstrative thought. On this understanding, demonstrative thoughts can be conceptually identical (identical in content) and yet be about distinct individuals because the conceptual elements of a demonstrative thought do not determine an object of thought independently of context. In contrast, individual constants and Russellian definite descriptions serve to single out an object independently of context. Consequently, demonstratives and names thus conceived do not form a unified semantic group. This means that if sentences containing demonstratives and names are alike in expressing *de re* thoughts, there is no semantic unity to the class of terms that serve to express *de re* thoughts. That is, if names are conceived as individual constants or Russellian definite descriptions, the explanation for why a sentence containing a name expresses a *de re* thought must be different from the explanation for why a sentence containing a demonstrative expresses a *de re* thought.

If, on the other hand, a demonstrative element in singular uses of proper names is recognized, the problem is overcome. This is precisely what the modified predicate view provides. Consider again sentence (1):

(1) Alfred studies in Princeton.

If the modified predicate view is correct, this sentence is incompletely interpreted: it has a truth-value only relative to a context of application in much the same way as the explicitly demonstrative sentence (23). Such sentences can be used to express thoughts about different individuals on different occasions. Which thought is expressed by (1) will depend on which Alfred (if any) is contextually identified. Thus S1 might utter (1) referring to Alfred Smith, S2 might utter (1) referring to Alfred Jones, and S3 might utter (1) attempting to refer to her imaginary friend. Assuming our earlier notation, the correct attributions of thought would then be as follows:

(27) Br (S1, <Alfred Smith, Princeton>, ⌜x is an Alfred and y is a Princeton and x studies in y⌝)

(28) Br (S2, <Alfred Jones, Princeton>, ⌜x is an Alfred and y is a Princeton and x studies in y⌝)

(29) Br (S3, < , Princeton>, ⌜x is an Alfred and y is a Princeton and x studies in y⌝)[33]

The conceptual elements of the thoughts thereby attributed no more single out a particular Alfred (or a particular Princeton) than the conceptual elements of the thoughts expressed by demonstrative utterances single out a particular object of thought: context is needed in each case.

If *de re* attitudes are taken to be those that are not fully conceptual, and the modified predicate view is correct, then both demonstrative utterances and sentences containing singular

uses of proper names express *de re* thoughts alike in virtue of containing a demonstrative element. Names and demonstratives will, then, fall within the same general semantic category. Consequently, the modified predicate view provides a unified theory of *de re* thought in virtue of providing a unified semantic theory of demonstratives and singular occurrences of proper names.

The second benefit of the modified predicate view is that it provides a straightforward solution to Kripke's puzzle about belief[34]. Kripke presents a case in which Peter has heard of Paderewski the musician and of Paderewski the statesman, but believes incorrectly that they are distinct individuals. Thinking he is talking about two distinct individuals, Peter assents to both of the following:

(30) Paderewski had musical talent.

(31) Paderewski had no musical talent.

If it is assumed that a normal speaker sincerely assenting to 'p' expresses the belief that p, then it looks as if Peter has inconsistent beliefs in virtue of the fact that both occurrences of 'Paderewski' refer to the same individual. Moreover, reporting Peter's beliefs in a certain way can render the reporter herself inconsistent in virtue of asserting that Peter both believes that Paderewski had musical talent and does not believe that Paderewski had musical talent. The modified predicate view avoids both troublesome consequences by recognizing a demonstrative element in singular uses of proper names. Thus adopting the notation given above the attribution to Peter of the beliefs he expresses by utterances of (30) and (31) respectively would be:

(32) Br (Peter, <Paderewski>, ⌜x is a Paderewski and x had musical talent⌝)

(33) Br (Peter, <Paderewski>, ⌜x is a Paderewski and x had no musical talent⌝)

On this understanding it is clear that Peter's thoughts are indeed inconsistent since inconsistent predicative elements are predicated of one and the same individual by Peter. However, there is no inconsistency between the *conceptual elements* of Peter's thoughts, which means that there is no irrationality. The conceptual elements of Peter's thoughts, being *de re*, function like open sentences and are not truth-evaluable independently of an application in a context. The contextual element that determines that the thought attributed to Peter by (32) is about Paderewski differs from the contextual element that determines that the thought attributed to Peter by (33) is about Paderewski.

The fact that singular uses of names involve a demonstrative element means that context is required to determine the object of thought. It is clear that an individual can be related to the same individual via different contextual relations, as Peter is. Indeed, the different contextual relations that obtain between Peter and Paderewski are presupposed in the generation of the apparent paradox. But there is nothing paradoxical in predicating inconsistent properties of an individual if the predications are tied to different contextual applications. In addition, an explicit mention of context in the attributions of thought to Peter ensures that any perceived inconsistency in the attributions is also eradicated. Consequently, the apparent inconsistency both on the part of Peter and on the part of the attributer disappears and the paradox is resolved.[35] Kripke is wrong to say that there can be no correct answer to the question, 'What does Peter believe about Paderewski?', that does not unjustly impugn Peter's rationality and logical acumen. Given the modified predicate view, one can say that Peter believes of Paderewski that he is a Paderewski who has musical talent, and that he is a Paderewski who has no musical

talent. Peter's rationality and logical acumen are not thereby impugned because of the implicit demonstrative involved in any singular use of 'Paderewki'.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that the modified predicate view of proper names is to be preferred over both the traditional predicate view and the more popular individual constant view. It provides a unified account of singular and non-singular occurrences of proper names; it yields the correct truth-conditions for sentences containing proper names; it provides a unified treatment of singular thought; and it provides a solution to Kripke's puzzle about belief.

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Notes

[1] These views are discussed in more detail in section 2.

[2] See Tarski (1956).

[3] While it is possible to reject the adequacy constraint, one who does so reject it must think seriously about what it is a semantic theory should do.

[4] Examples (1)-(5) are taken from Burge (1973) p. 429.

[5] If the modified predicate theory is correct, the following inferences are analogous at the level of logical form to (6) and (7) respectively:

(6') That cow lives in a barn, so at least one cow lives in a barn.

(7') Dogs tend to have fleas, so that dog probably has fleas.

The fact that (6') and (7') are also intuitively valid provides evidence that proper names function as general terms. Thanks to Ray Elugardo for drawing my attention to this.

[6] Examples such as (8) and (9) are given in Hornsby (1976) p. 232.

[7] See Russell (1911) and (1918).

[8] See Quine (1953).

[9] See Russell (1911) and (1918), and, more recently, Bach (1987).

[10] Not everyone will accept the orthodox view that demonstratives are singular terms. See for example King (2001). This will also have implications for the claim that demonstratives are rigid.

[11] For the details see Burge (1973) section III.

[12] See Kripke (1980) for a series of criticisms of predicate theories along these lines.

[13] There is a standard way of getting some descriptive theories of names to meet Kripke's objections about rigidity: actualize the descriptions ('the person who actually was taught by Plato and taught Alexander', 'the actual aristotelizer', 'the individual actually named "Aristotle"'). However, there tend to be problems with such theories in complicated embeddings, for which see Soames (2002) pp. 46-50.

[14] The modified predicate view avoids the concern by rejecting (i).

[15] See for example Salmon (1986) and Soames (2002).

[16] Although the Russellian view must also index names in the truth-theory, the truth-theory need not specify the referent of each name since semantic understanding on this view consists in knowing the predicate that an individual uniquely satisfies, and hence the referent of each name is determined by a specification in the meta-language of the relevant predicate.

[17] See Larson and Segal (1995).

[18] Boer (1974) p. 395.

[19] For other objections together with responses see Elugardo (2002).

[20] See also Recanati (1993).

[21] See Higginbotham (1988). The example is his.

[22] See Segal (2001). Segal does not himself endorse the view, but suggests the modification as a friendly amendment.

[23] On might also refer back to the series of problems connected with the traditional predicate view detailed in section 2.

[24] See Segal (2001) pp. 560-561, from which the examples below are also taken.

[25] There is a parallel between (14a)/(14b) and the following pair:

(14c) This is that horse I mentioned yesterday.

(14d) *This is horse I mentioned yesterday.

The parallel is indirect evidence that proper names function as general terms, since ‘horse’ is clearly a general term. This point is due to Ray Elugardo.

[26] It might be thought that examples (13) and (14) are different in character because (13b) is pragmatically inappropriate in the circumstances but grammatical nonetheless, whereas (14b) is simply ungrammatical. This would matter if (R1) and (R2) were rules of linguistic etiquette rather than rules of grammaticality since they would then provide an explanation for the bizarreness of (13b) but not an explanation of the ungrammaticality of (14b). However, I think both examples are best understood as bizarre rather than as ungrammatical.

[27] See King (2006). I am heavily indebted to Ray Elugardo for bringing this article to my attention and for helpful discussion of the material.

[28] Examples (12)-(13), (15)-(20) and (22) are King's.

[29] Moreover, as Ray Elugardo has pointed out in conversation, it is not clear why (18) should be regarded as ungrammatical. For instance, on being asked whether a particular Glenn Bunting is happy, the parent of a whining child might point to his child while uttering (18). In such a context, the utterance might be true even if the whining child is not a Glenn Bunting.

[30] See Evans (1982) and McDowell (1977), (1984) and (1986) for a defense of the view.

[31] The understanding of *de re* attitudes that follows, together with the accompanying notation, is due to Burge (1977).

[32] 'Br' marks a relation between a thinker, a propositional fragment and the members of the ordered n-tuple denoted by the pointed brackets and terms it contains: it does not mark a relation between a thinker, a propositional fragment and an ordered n-tuple. If it did, intuitively empty thoughts would in fact be thoughts about the empty set. This has the result that de re attitudes are multigrade relations.

[33] While any utterance of (1) is grammatical, some utterances will express incomplete thoughts which are neither true nor false, as is indicated by (29).

[34] See Kripke (1979).

[35] There is a worry here that a form of Kripke's puzzle can be constructed for any expression which someone can count as understanding while mistakenly supposing to be ambiguous. If that is right then more will need to be done to solve Kripke's puzzle: the proposed solution given here depends upon identifying a demonstrative element in proper names, but the proposal that there is a demonstrative element in predicates seems unwelcome.

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