

The Multiple Uses of Proper Nouns

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Abstract In this essay I will defend the thesis that proper nouns are primarily used as proper names—as atomic singular referring expressions—and different possible predicative uses of proper nouns are derived from this primary use or an already derived secondary predicative use of proper nouns. There is a general linguistic phenomenon of the derivation of new meanings from already existing meanings of an expression. This phenomenon has different manifestations and different linguistic mechanisms can be used to establish derived meanings of different kinds of expressions. One prominent variation of these mechanisms was dubbed in Nunberg. (Linguist Philos 3:143–184, 1979, J Semant 12:109–132, 1995, The handbook of pragmatics. Blackwell, Oxford, 2004 *meaning transfer*.) In the essay I will distinguish two different sub-varieties of this mechanism: *occurrent* and *lexical* meaning transfer. Nunberg conceives of meaning transfer as a mechanism that allows us to derive a new truth-conditional meaning of an expression from an already existing truth-conditional meaning of this expression. I will argue that *most* predicative uses of proper nouns can be captured by the mentioned two varieties of *truth-conditional* meaning transfer. But there are also important exceptions like the predicative use of the proper noun ‘Alfred’ in as sentence like ‘Every Alfred that I met was a nice guy’. I will try to show that we cannot make use of truth-conditional meaning transfer to account for such uses and I will argue for a the existence of second variant of meaning transfer that I will call *use-conditional meaning transfer* and that allows us also to capture these derived meanings of proper nouns. Furthermore, I will try to show that the proposed explanation of multiple uses of proper nouns is superior to the view supported by defenders of a predicative view on proper names.

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1 Setting the Stage: Referential and Predicative Uses of Proper Names

A noun like ‘Alfred’ is prototypically used as a proper name with the purpose of referring to a single object. Apart from its *referential use*, this noun also seems to have a *predicative use*. The following sentences provide examples of these two different uses:

- (1) Alfred is a nice guy.
- (2) Every Alfred in our club is a nice guy.

In the case of (1), the noun ‘Alfred’ is used as a proper name; in the case of (2) as a predicate. Let us call nouns that can be used as proper names and as predicates in the following *proper nouns*.

One thing is quite obvious and should be uncontroversial about the use of ‘Alfred’ in (2): according to the default reading of (2), the predicate ‘Alfred’ is used in (2) in such a way that it satisfies the following general equivalence schema¹:

(PE) For every x : x is an N iff x is a bearer of the name ‘N’.

That is, we can substitute ‘Alfred’ in (2) with ‘bearer of the name ‘Alfred’’ *salva veritate*. But there are also more controversial and interesting issues that concern the use of ‘Alfred’ in (1) and (2). It is not clear which semantic status the instances of (PE) have. Are they semantic equivalences? And if so, can we provide an account that captures the explanatory status of these rather peculiar semantic equivalences? Can we understand them as explicit definitions? It seems that either the use of ‘Alfred’ in (2) is in some sense *derived* from the use (1) or the other way round. In any case, there seem to be systematic semantic connections between the use of ‘Alfred’ as a name in (1) and as a predicate in (2). How can we justify this intuition? And if this intuition is true, what is the most plausible way to account for these connections?

Before we discuss these questions in more detail, let us focus on a different class of predicative uses of proper nouns that significantly differ from the use in (2). Let us call predicative uses of proper nouns that satisfy equivalences like (PE) *original examples*, because these examples were originally used by certain philosophers and linguists to motivate the thesis that the noun ‘Alfred’ has in a sentence like (1) exactly the same semantic status as in (2): it is considered to be a predicate in both cases.²

Apart from these uses, there are at least three different classes of *additional examples* of predicative uses of proper nouns that all share the negative feature that they do not satisfy the equivalence schema (PE).

As a first class of additional examples we can introduce *dynasty* or *family examples* of a predicative use of proper nouns. The following is an example of this sort³:

¹ Cf.: Rami (2014a, 856–861).

² Cf.: Sloat (1969, 27), Burge (1973, 429), Elbourne (2005, 170–171).

³ Cf.: Boer (1975, 390).

(3) Waldo Cox is a Romanov.

This sentence has a reading according to which the predicate ‘is a Romanov’ is at least roughly equivalent with the predicate ‘is a member of the Romanov-family/dynasty’.

A second class concerns more or less context-sensitive *production examples* of a predicative use of proper nouns. Here is one example⁴:

(4) Linda bought three Picassos yesterday.

This sentence seems to have a reading relative to which ‘is a Picasso’ is intuitively equivalent to ‘is a work produced by Picasso’, where ‘Picasso’ refers to the famous artist with this name.

The third class concerns highly context-sensitive *resemblance examples* of predicative uses of proper nouns. Let us focus on the following example of this sort⁵:

(5) Two Napoleons were at the party yesterday.

There are contexts of use where (5) can be used to convey the thought that two people that resemble Napoleon in the way they are dressed were at a certain party at a certain day. In the case of such examples a contextually salient mode of resemblance seems to be operative, and certain objects are compared on this basis with a specific contextually salient bearer of the used proper noun conceived of as a proper name.

These three classes of additional examples of predicative uses of proper nouns are undoubtedly examples of *derived* uses of an expression. These uses are derived from other *primary* uses of the very same proper noun by means of the application of a specific linguistic mechanism. In some cases, the application of these mechanisms leads to the establishment of a new meaning of the used expression. In other cases, these mechanism only lead to purely pragmatic and highly context-sensitive derived uses of certain expressions. It is relatively clear and straightforward which linguistic mechanism is operative in the case of the additional examples: the so-called mechanism of *meaning transfer*.⁶

These additional predicative uses also seem to be interesting as *objects of comparison* with the original examples. The following question is suggestive: Are our original examples also derived uses of proper nouns? Are they derived in the same sense as the additional examples? We will investigate these questions in detail and we will also consider whether it is possible to apply the mentioned mechanism to our original examples.

My investigations will proceed in the following way: I will introduce in the next section the linguistic mechanism of *meaning transfer* as it is characterized in Nunberg (1979, 1995, 2004) and distinguish two important varieties of this

⁴ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 117), Fara (2012, 7), Jeshion (2013, 10).

⁵ C.f. Burge (1973, 429); Boer (1975, 399), Fara (2012, 6), Jeshion (2013, 11).

⁶ C.f. Nunberg (1979, 1995, 2004), Recanati (2004).

mechanism: *occurrent* and *lexical* meaning transfer. After that, I will use these two varieties to account for production, family and resemblance examples. I will argue for the thesis that *resemblance examples* should be interpreted as examples of occurrent meaning transfer. Production examples are a mixed bag. Some cases can be captured by occurrent meaning transfer, some by means of lexical meaning transfer. *Dynasty* or *family examples* are considered as a homogenous group of examples that can be captured by the mechanism of lexical meaning transfer. After that, I will argue for the positive thesis that the instances of (PE) should be conceived of as semantic equivalences and the negative thesis that the mechanism of meaning transfer described by Nunberg cannot be used in a meaningful way to account for our original examples.⁷

In the third section, I will explore the possibility of conceiving of the proposed mechanism of meaning transfer as only one kind of variety of a more general linguistic transformation phenomenon that consists in the derivation of new meanings by making use of different kinds of transformational mechanisms. I will consider two alternative and modified variants of the mechanism of meaning transfer and I will use one of these alternative mechanisms to capture our original examples. According to this view, the original examples are different from the additional examples in an important respect. In the latter cases, there is a meaning transfer that only concerns the truth-conditional level of meaning, while in the former cases, there is a transfer from the use-conditional (or presuppositional) level of meaning of the name 'Alfred' to the truth-conditional level of meaning of the predicate 'Alfred'. Against this background, I will defend a *use-conditional* version of the polysemy view concerning our original examples.

In the last and final section, I will provide a comparison of my explanation based on use-conditional meaning transfer with an alternative explanation of the proposed systematic semantic connections between the use of 'Alfred' in (1) and in (2): the so-called predicate view of names. I will try to give some reasons why my proposed account is superior to this alternative account.

2 The Linguistic Mechanism of Meaning Transfer

According to certain linguists and philosophers, meaning transfer is a general linguistic mechanism that can be operative in the case of different linguistic phenomena like metonymy, metaphors or polysemy.⁸ This mechanism can be used to derive certain new correct uses or meanings of a specific target expression from an already established meaning of this expression. Meaning transfer allows us to assign an additional meaning to such an expression in a systematic, more or less context-sensitive way with an extension that is significantly different from the extension of this expression relative to its original meaning. According to Nunberg, it is a defining feature of each case of meaning transfer that there is a direct correspondence between the original extension (property) and the derived extension

⁷ This is especially directed against such attempts in Leckie (2012), Jeshion (2013).

⁸ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 109, 113, 116), Recanati (2004, 26–29).

(property) of the target expression based on a functional mapping.⁹ In paradigm cases,¹⁰ this correspondence is based on a so-called *transfer relation* that holds between elements of the original extension and elements of the derived extension.¹¹

We can distinguish two important sub-classes of meaning transfer: *occurrent* and *lexical* meaning transfer. In the case of an *occurrent* meaning transfer, we have got a *contextually salient* transfer relation that can only be exploited relative to a restricted range of situations. In this sense, meaning transfer is a purely pragmatic phenomenon. In the case of a *lexical* meaning transfer, on the other hand, we have a stable, contextually invariant transfer relation that is licenced by a lexical rule and can be exploited relative to a large class of different situations. We therefore have in this case an initial pragmatic phenomenon that is transformed into a semantic one by a certain sort of conventionalization.¹²

A standard example of a case of *occurrent* meaning transfer can be provided by making use of the following sentence¹³:

(6) The ham-sandwich is at table 7.

In a situation where a visitor of a restaurant has ordered a ham-sandwich, (6) can be used to convey the thought that this specific visitor sits at table 7. The original extension of ‘ham-sandwich’ is the set of ham-sandwiches. The derived extension is the set of orderers of a ham-sandwich. The contextually salient transfer relation is the relation expressed by ‘x ordered y’, it obtains between a specific element of the derived extension and some element of the original extension. The meaning transfer in such a case is only *occurrent*, because it is possible to use (6) in different situations to convey different contents based on a different contextually salient transfer relation.

The situation is different if *lexical* meaning transfer is operative in cases of polysemy.¹⁴ A standard example of a polysemic expression is the expression ‘maple’. According to its primary meaning, this expression can be correctly applied to trees of a specific kind; according to its secondary derived meaning, it also applies to the wood of these trees. The fact that the expression ‘maple’ has a primary and a derived secondary meaning can also be captured by a semantic equivalence in the following way, if we use ‘maple₁’ to express the primary and ‘maple₂’ to express the secondary meaning of ‘maple’:

(E1) For every x: x is a unit of maple₂ iff x is a unit of the wood of a maple₁.

Prima facie it is not clear whether every kind of polysemy can be captured on the basis of the mechanism of meaning transfer characterized by Nunberg, but the

⁹ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 112).

¹⁰ According to Nunberg, this feature distinguishes metonymies from metaphors. Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 113).

¹¹ Cf. Nunberg (1995, 112–13).

¹² Cf.: Nunberg (2004, 351–354).

¹³ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 115).

¹⁴ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 116–119).

maple-case definitely can. The truth of (E1) is licenced by a *lexical rule* that does not only concern a specific predicate for trees like the predicate ‘is a maple’, but predicates of this kind in general. This lexical rule can be formulated in the following way:

- (G1) If ‘N’ is a noun that is used as predicate for a certain sort of trees, then ‘N’ can also be used as a mass term for the wood of these trees.¹⁵

Such a lexical rule establishes a specific *stable* transfer relation in connection with predicates for trees. Against this background, these predicates receive a secondary meaning that can be captured by a semantic equivalence like (E1). In the maple-case, the transfer relation is the relation expressed by ‘x is the wood of y’ and this relation obtains between members of the original and the derived extension of the expression ‘maple’.

2.1 Meaning Transfer and Resemblances Examples

Let us now show how the mechanism of meaning transfer can be applied to our family, production and resemblance examples. We will start with the *resemblances examples*. They are examples of occurrent meaning transfer. In each case of this class of examples a certain *resemblance relation* is operative as a meaning transfer relation. The specific form and prominence of such a resemblance relation is highly context-dependent. We can distinguish two *important* sub-classes of resemblance examples based on different resemblance relations: *specificity* and *typicality* examples. In the former cases the meaning transfer is a resemblance relation that can be expressed by an expression of the form ‘x resembles y in the respect C’. This relation provides a comparison between different objects relative to some specific way of resemblance. So for example, if we use (5) in a situation that concerns a certain costume party, it may turn out that the most adequate interpretation of such a sentence makes use of a meaning transfer relation that can be expressed by ‘x resembles y in the way y is dressed’. And therefore, our example sentence (5) conveys in such a context that two people that were dressed as Napoleon were at a certain party. We might use the very same sentence (5) in a different situation that, for example, concerns a party where no costumes are worn. In such a context it is possible to make use of a different salient resemblance relation as our meaning transfer relation. One prominent candidate in such a context is the relation expressed by ‘x resembles y in certain/every respect(s) that we typically associate with y’. According to this reading, (5) is an example of the typicality variant of resemblance cases. In such a case, we compare a certain person or persons with a salient object in more than one respect, namely in those respects that are typically associated with this salient object.¹⁶ There might be other variations of the resemblance examples, other contextually salient procedures to make different respects of resemblance salient. But all these different kinds of resemblance examples share one general feature. They all satisfy the following schema:

¹⁵ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 117).

¹⁶ Cf.: Fara (2012, 11–13).

(S1) For every x and every context c : x is a N_2 (relative to c) iff x resembles N_1 in every respect that is (made) salient by the utterer of 'N' in c .

Against this background, I think it makes sense to classify resemblance examples as a distinctive class of examples of occurrent meaning transfer.

2.2 Meaning Transfer and Production Examples

Let us now focus on *production examples*. There seems to be *at least* two different clear-cut classes of nouns that can be used as proper names and that also have a secondary meaning relative to which they can be used as predicates for certain products of the bearers of the corresponding names. Firstly, we have those cases like (4), where we can use a noun that is used as a name for an artist as a predicate for the works of this artist. Secondly, we have cases like the following, where we can use a noun that is used as a name for a company as a predicate for the products of this company:

(7) This car is a Chevrolet

Examples like (4) and (7) seems to be closely related to our mentioned maple-case. These sentences contain predicates with a stable meaning that is not in the same way dependent on the situation of use as in cases of occurrent meaning transfer. Furthermore, we can find the very same systematic use of expressions like 'Chevrolet' and 'Picasso' in different natural languages. As in the maple-case there seem to be lexical rules operative that define the two mentioned sub-classes of production examples. We can formulate them roughly¹⁷ in the following way¹⁸:

(G2) If 'N' is a noun that is used as proper name for an artist, then 'N' can also be used as a predicate for the works of this artist.

(G3) If 'N' is a noun that is used as proper name for a company, then 'N' can also be used as a predicate for the products of this company.

Applied to our examples (4) and (7) these two rules account for the correctness of the following two semantic equivalences:

(E2) For every x : x is a Picasso₂ iff x is a work of (the artist) Picasso₁.

(E3) For every x : x is a Chevrolt₂ iff x is a product of (the company) Chevrolet₁.

Therefore, it seems to be plausible to assume that names for artists and names for companies are in the same way *systematically ambiguous* as predicates for kinds of trees. In both cases a transfer relation holds between elements of the original and elements of the derived extension of our target notion. Therefore, they are both *paradigm* cases of lexical meaning transfer.

But there are also purely pragmatic production examples that are clearly examples of occurrent meaning transfer. For example, a sentence like the following

¹⁷ Nunberg points out that these rules might have exceptions, because they are subject to general conditions of noteworthiness. Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 117).

¹⁸ Cf.: Nunberg (1995, 116–119).

can be used to convey that a certain cake is a typical product of (the actions of) a certain guy named ‘Nick’:

(8) This cake is a typical Nick.

Such a use of (9) is highly context sensitive and it clearly depends on the conversational setting of a situation relative to which (9) is used, which meaning transfer relation is operative and relevant. Hence, there are also production examples that are the result of occurrent meaning transfer.

2.3 Meaning Transfer and Family Examples

Beside our lexical production examples, dynasty or family examples are also examples of derived uses of names that can be captured by *lexical* meaning transfer. A dynasty is a specific subspecies of a (human) family. In this sense, a dynasty case like (3) is only a specific sub-variety of a larger class of cases that concern family-names. A family example that is not a dynasty example is the following¹⁹:

(9) Billy Jones is in reality a Smith.

There seem to be at least two different predicative uses of family names that have to be distinguished. We can distinguish *institutional* uses from *biological* uses, because there is a legal or institutional notion of a family and a biological notion. In the first case a person’s membership of a family depends on certain institutional properties like marriage or adoption. In the second case, the membership is determined by genetic code. Our example sentences (3) and (9) can be interpreted relative to both readings. Which of these two readings is relevant depends on the context of use. But this does not mean that our family cases are examples of occurrent meaning transfer. On the contrary: these two readings are stable across a very large number of different situations and the very same systematically derived predicative use of nouns that can be used as family-names can be found in different natural languages. We can distinguish the following two different lexical rules to capture this two meanings of family-names:

(G4.1/2) If ‘N’ is a noun that is used as a (human) family-name, then ‘N’ can also be used as a predicate for the institutional/biological members of the corresponding family.

A lexical rule like (G4.2) constitutes a derived meaning for the class of human family-names and therefore also accounts for the truth of the following semantic equivalence:

(E4) For every x: x is a Romanov iff x is a biological member of the Romanov family.

¹⁹ Cf.: Boer (1975, 391).

The expression ‘the Romanov family’ refers to a specific family whose core members are bearers of the name ‘Romanov’.²⁰ Therefore, we can define a secondary meaning of a predicate like ‘is a Romanov’ licenced by the lexical rule (G4.2) in the following way:

(E4*) For every x : x is a Romanov₂ iff x is a biological member of a certain family whose core members are Romanovs₁.

This shows that our family examples are again *paradigm* cases of lexical meaning transfer. In their case, the meaning transfer relation is expressed by ‘ x is a biological descendant of a core member y of a certain family’. And this relation holds between elements of the extension of the derived and secondary meaning of ‘is a Romanov’ and elements of the extension of the primary meaning of the very same expression. But (E4*) also provides reasons to assume that the original examples of predicative uses of proper names are examples of a systematic use with a stable meaning. Lexical semantic transfer is only then possible, if there is an already established meaning from which an additional meaning can be derived. (E4*) shows that this *primary meaning* of ‘Romanov’ corresponds with the predicative use of our original examples. Therefore, the family examples provide some reasons to hold that the instances of (PE) are semantic equivalences. This assessment is confirmed by the fact that the use of a proper noun that satisfies the schema (PE) is in the same way systematic and can also be found in different languages like the use of ‘Chevrolet’ as a production example and the use of ‘Romanov’ as a family example. But the central remaining questions in respect to the original examples are the following: Are the original examples themselves examples of derived uses? If so, in which sense are they derived uses? One significant difference between the ‘Chevrolet’- and the ‘Romanov’-example is that the former expression has a derived meaning that is derived from the meaning of a name, while the latter has a derived meaning that is derived from the meaning of a predicate. Are the meanings of the original examples derived from the meanings of a name?

2.4 Meaning Transfer and the Original Examples

Two different accounts have been proposed in the literature to capture our original uses by means of Nunberg’s mechanism of meaning transfer. Firstly, there is a metalinguistic version that aims to capture our original examples by means of occurrent semantic transfer.²¹ According to this approach, (2) is not quite an accurate semantic representation of the desired reading of the noun ‘Alfred’, because in fact the use of ‘Alfred’ in (2) is of a specific metalinguistic kind and therefore the correct representation would be the following:

(2’) Every ‘Alfred’ in our club is a nice guy.

²⁰ Such a view seems to be implausible if we individuate names by means of their spelling or pronunciation. Cf.: Boer (1975, 390–391). But the situation changes if we make use of a more plausible approach that individuates names by means of their origin and therefore historically (cf.: Rami 2014b).

²¹ Cf.: Leckie (2012, 14–15), Jeshion (2013, 15–17).

On the basis of this reformulation, it seems to be possible to apply the mechanism of meaning transfer to the example (2'). The expression “‘Alfred’” has an original use relative to which it functions as a name of a proper name. So the extension of such expressions is a specific *name*. We can now make use of the meaning transfer relation expressed by ‘x is a bearer of y’ and constitute on this basis a new shifted extension for the expression “‘Alfred’”. This new extension is the set of bearers of the name ‘Alfred’. Hence, we get the desired reading of (2').

However, there are several reasons that speak against this analysis, some I have already briefly mentioned. Firstly, it might be doubted that competent speakers really are confused about the correct interpretation of (2), and that the correct use of ‘Alfred’ in such a context requires the use of quotation marks. There are other examples that are clearly of the proposed kind and where competent speakers are clearly aware of the fact that quotation marks are required to make sense of such a statement, like in the case of:

(10) I counted three ‘terrific’ and two ‘awesome’.

Secondly, our original predicative uses of proper nouns seem to be more stable and context-insensitive than those special uses of quoted expressions in combination with determiners. We have already pointed out that they are quite systematic across different languages and that they can also function as inputs of lexical semantic transfer. The situation is different according to the proposed analysis. The following sentence, for example, has at least two different readings, and it can be used with both readings relative to the very same situation:

(11) There are two ‘Alfred(s)’ in this room.²²

There might be a situation where we find two inscriptions of the word ‘Alfred’ on a blackboard in a certain room and where two bearers of the name ‘Alfred’ are also present. If the given interpretation of (2') is correct, then one might use the sentence (14) relative to such a situation with two different readings: One can either convey that there are two inscriptions of the name ‘Alfred’ in the mentioned room or that there are two bearers of the name ‘Alfred’ in this room. In general, a sentence like (11) can have a number of different readings that depend on the specific contextually salient transfer relation. Hence, these are examples of occurrent meaning transfer. But intuitively the mentioned original uses of proper nouns do not have this kind of flexibility and contextual variability. Therefore, I think there are good reasons to reject the proposed metalinguistic account.

There is also another, non-metalinguistic version that aims to make use of lexical meaning transfer to account for original uses. This view was defended under the label *polysemy view*.²³ The basic idea behind this account is that we can capture the

²² One additional problem of an interpretation of original uses of a noun like ‘Alfred’ on the basis of metalinguistic occurrent transfer has to do with the plural of ‘Alfred’ that seems to be required to interpret a sentence like ‘Some Alfreds are nice’ in an adequate way. It is not clear how we account for this kind of plural on the basis of the metalinguistic view in an adequate way. C.f: Jeshion (2013, 16–17).

²³ This account is defended in Leckie (2012, 15–21).

meaning of the noun 'Alfred' used in (2) as a secondary meaning that is derived from the meaning of the proper name 'Alfred'. There is a certain transfer relation that holds between the extensions of these two expressions and we can formulate on this basis a lexical rule to establish this kind of transfer in a conventionalized way. Furthermore, it is claimed that on the basis of this lexical rule that it is possible to explain why the following semantic equivalence holds:

(12) For every x : x is an Alfred iff x is bearer of the name 'Alfred'.

That is the basic idea behind this account. And on the basis of this *general* description one may think that original examples are on par with production examples. In the latter case, we indeed have derived a specific meaning of a predicate like 'Picasso' from the meaning of the corresponding name 'Picasso'. But it is quite obvious, I think, that these two cases are different if one compares the semantic equivalence (12) that should be explained by means of such an account with the following semantic equivalence that we have established by means of the lexical rule (G2):

(E2) For every x : x is a Picasso₂ iff x is a work of (the artist) Picasso₁.

The significant difference between these two equivalences is that the name 'Picasso' is *used* in (E2) and the name 'Alfred' is *mentioned* in (12). And this difference is important with respect to the adequacy of the mentioned proposal. According to the polysemy view, the relation expressed by 'x is a bearer of the name y' is considered as a meaning transfer relation in Nunberg's sense.²⁴ But this relation cannot be used as meaning transfer relation to establish a new meaning of the predicate 'is an Alfred'. A transfer relation is a relation that obtains between certain elements of the extension of the derived notion and certain elements of the extension of the target notion. The relation expressed by 'x is a bearer of the name y' is a relation that can only obtain between certain objects and *names*, but *names* are typically not the objects of the extension of a proper name like 'Alfred'. Therefore, we cannot use this relation to derive the meaning of the predicate 'Alfred' from the meaning of the name 'Alfred'. We either need a different kind of relation that has the desired features for the proposed meaning transfer or we should give up the idea that we can derive the meaning of the predicate 'Alfred' from the meaning of the proper name 'Alfred' in the way described by Nunberg.

Are there any relations that are appropriate for our purpose? The relation expressed by 'x bears the same name as y' is a relation that holds between elements of the extension of 'is an Alfred' (relative to its use in a sentence like (2)) and the extension of the name 'Alfred' (relative to a specific use of this name). Nevertheless, this relation is not appropriate for our purpose, because a certain individual may not only be a bearer of the name 'Alfred', but also of other names as well. Therefore, we cannot use the relation expressed by 'x bears the same name as y' for our purpose because it would determine the extension of the predicate 'is an Alfred' in an incorrect way: The extension of this predicate would contain every

²⁴ Cf.: Leckie (2012, 7–10, 15–16).

object that shares a name with a specific Alfred. That is not the desired result. Furthermore, such a relation does not provide the desired systematic connection between the original meaning of ‘Alfred’ and the derived meaning of ‘Alfred’ according to its use in a sentence like (2).

At the first sight, the relation expressed by ‘x shares the name ‘Alfred’ with y’ might seem to do a better job. This relation obtains *only* between elements of the extension of ‘is an Alfred’ [relative to its use in a sentence like (2)] and the extension of the name ‘Alfred’ (relative to a specific use of this name). Hence, it seems possible to establish the desired extension of ‘is Alfred’ by means of such a meaning transfer relation in a correct way.

But we can *only* determine the *extension* of ‘is Alfred’ on this basis in a correct way, but not the *intension* of this predicate and therefore the following equivalence is not correct if it is conceived as a semantic equivalence:

(13) For every x: x is an Alfred₂ iff x shares the name ‘Alfred’ with Alfred₁.

The good thing about this equivalence is that it has the same kind of logical form as (E2), and it could therefore at least from a formal point of view fill the desired role. But while (E2) is also intensionally correct, (13) is not. In (13) ‘Alfred₁’ refers to an actual bearer of the name ‘Alfred’. There are other possible worlds relative to which this actual bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ is no bearer of the name ‘Alfred’. Therefore, (13) predicts that the predicate ‘Alfred’ has an empty extension in respect to such a possible world. But that is intuitively incorrect. The fact whether something is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ does not depend on any kind of relation to an *actual* bearer of this name. This shows that (12) and (13) are not necessarily equivalent, and only (12) provides the intuitively correct semantic equivalence in the case of the original predicative use of the noun ‘Alfred’, while (13) has to be rejected as incorrect.²⁵

However, there seems to be a possibility to modify (13) and thereby circumvent the mentioned modal problem that concerns (13). There is a specific technical way to construe an expression for a relation that allows us to generate the desired extension and intension.²⁶ For this purpose, we can use the relational expression ‘x and y are such that x is a bearer of ‘Alfred’ and y is an actual bearer of ‘Alfred’ and hence we can reformulate (13) in the following way:

(13*) For every x: x is an Alfred₂ iff x and Alfred₁ are such that x bears the name ‘Alfred’ and Alfred₁ actually bears the name ‘Alfred’.

This kind of equivalence is extensionally and intensionally correct, and hence intensionally equivalent with (12). But it is obviously a quite artificial way to establish a relation between the extensions of the original and the derived meaning of the noun ‘Alfred’. In fact, not every construable relation can be used as a

²⁵ The same problem, for example, would affect a proposal that holds that ordinary proper names are ambiguous and tries to capture the meaning of ‘is an Alfred’ according to its original use on the basis of a disjunction like ‘x = Alfred₁ or x = Alfred₂ or ... or x = Alfred_n’. Such a proposal also has an additional problem, because there can be objects that do not bear the name ‘Alfred’ in the actual world, but bear this name in some different possible world.

²⁶ This possibility was pointed out to me by an anonymous referee.

meaning transfer relation. If there wouldn't be any constraints concerning the specific nature of a meaning transfer relation, we could link the objects of any two different extensions by means of an arbitrary construed relation like the one that is expressed by 'x and y are such that x is an element of extension E_1 and y is an element of extension E_2 '. Hence, we could derive any new meaning from any existing meaning of any expression, and that would make the mechanism of meaning transfer completely arbitrary and unsystematic. What are constraints for an adequate meaning transfer relation?

There is a significant difference between those relations that we used in the case of (E1)–(E3), and any relation that can be specified by an expression of the form 'x and y are such that x is F and y is G', if 'F' and 'G' are not necessarily equivalent. (E1)–(E3) make use of *natural* relations that obtain between members of the original extension and some other objects independent of any sort of stipulation. The principles (E1)–(E3) exploit these natural relations to construe a new kind of extension of a predicate. In the case of (13*) and any similar case that makes use of a relation that can be specified by an expression of the form 'x and y are such that x is F and y is G', a specific relation between different extensions is only *stipulated*. Furthermore, in such cases two monadic predicates are involved that are not intensionally equivalent and that determine two different independent extensions. Hence, such artificial relational expressions only describe a completely arbitrary relation between every member of a first and every member of a second set of things. This shows, there is a significant *explanatory* difference between an equivalence like (E1) and an equivalence like (13*). In the former case the determination of the extension of the derived meaning of a certain expression essentially depends on those factors that determine the original extension. In the case of (13*) the derived extension is determined by factors that are completely independent from those factors that determine the original extension of 'Alfred'. The link that is drawn on the basis of (13*) to the original extension of 'Alfred' is explanatorily superfluous. Against this background, we can now formulate the following general constraint that a suitable meaning transfer relation has to satisfy: *A genuine meaning transfer relation exploits a certain non-arbitrary, systematic relation that obtains between objects in the original extension of a certain expression E and objects in the desired derived extension of E that leads to a determination of the extension of the derived meaning of E that explanatorily depends on factors that determine the extension of the original meaning of E.*

This shows that there is no adequate possibility of establishing the derived extension of a predicate like 'is an Alfred' by exploiting an adequate meaning transfer relation that determines this derived extension in an explanatorily basic way. All such attempts face a dilemma: either the used meaning transfer relation satisfies the specified constraints for an adequate meaning transfer relation, but it does not determine the desired derived extension and intension in an adequate way, or such a relation can be used to determine the desired derived extension and intension in an adequate way, but it does not satisfy the general constraints of an adequate meaning transfer relation. Any attempt that makes use of the outlined mechanism of meaning transfer to establish (12) as a semantic equivalence cannot satisfy both requirements. And hence any such attempt is either materially or

explanatorily inadequate. The original examples are *significantly* different from the additional examples, where such a derivation is possible.

What are the consequences of this observation? (12) is a perfectly correct semantic equivalence: it specifies the extension and intension of the predicate ‘is an Alfred’ according to its use in a sentence like (2) in an intuitively correct way. But this equivalence cannot be established by the same kind of lexical meaning transfer that allows us to establish the equivalences (E1) and (E2). Therefore, we should in any case stick with the instances of (PE) conceived of as semantic equivalences. Should we additionally assume that the meaning of ‘Alfred’ in a sentence like (2) is not derived at all? It would be a bit premature to conclude from the established thesis that the meaning of ‘Alfred’ relative to its use in (2) cannot be derived by means of the mechanism of meaning transfer specified by Nunberg that the meaning of ‘Alfred’ is in no other possible sense derived. There are at least two obvious alternative options: Firstly, it might be possible to modify and generalize the mechanism of meaning transfer specified by Nunberg in a meaningful way to also capture the desired cases. Secondly, it might be possible to make use of a different, but closely related linguistic mechanism to account for the derived status of the meaning of such a predicate. In the next section I will try to vindicate the second of these two options.

3 The Derived Nature of the Meaning of the Original Examples

The linguistic mechanism of meaning transfer that Nunberg describes concerns the truth-conditional meaning of an expression. He gives an account that explains how the extension of a secondary occasional or lexical truth-conditional meaning of an expression can be derived in a *systematic way* from the extension of the primary truth-conditional lexical meaning of the very same expression. The systematic connection is provided by a specific transfer relation that obtains between members of the two different extensions. In principle, there seem to be other possible ways to derive a new truth-conditional meaning of an expression from certain aspects of an established meaning of the very same expression, whether these aspects concern the truth-conditional or some additional level of meaning.

One idea would be to claim that we can derive a new truth-conditional meaning of a certain expression from any already established *semantic feature* of this expression. The truth-conditional meaning and the corresponding extension of an expression are two semantic features of this linguistic expression, but expressions can have other semantic features apart from their truth-conditional meaning or extension. The proper name ‘Alfred’, for example, seems to have the semantic feature that it has at least one bearer. We may postulate a general lexical rule that allows us to derive the truth-conditional meaning of the predicate ‘Alfred’ which is exemplified by its use in (1) from the mentioned semantic feature of the proper name ‘Alfred’. *Prima facie*, that sounds relatively reasonable and it seems to be possible to establish the instances of (PE) as semantic equivalences on this basis. But closer inspection shows that such an account is problematic in certain respects. Firstly, it is possible that there are meaningful proper names that do not have any bearers. A name can be introduced by means of specific acts that identify the bearer of a name in a purely descriptive way. The subsequent users of this

name might erroneously believe or presuppose that the introduction was successful and a certain name-using practice becomes established. Such names without bearers might nevertheless have a corresponding predicative use that satisfies the schema (PE). Therefore, the alleged semantic feature that certain names have at most one bearer cannot be constitutive for the predicative use that satisfies the schema (PE). Secondly, it is not clear whether we should conceive of the fact that a certain name has at most one bearer as a *semantic* fact. The name-bearer relation itself is an institutional relation like the relation of marriage, and it is constituted in a similar way as the latter relation. Some philosophers think that this institutional relation constitutes the relation of semantic reference in the case of names. But this view is controversial and it very much depends on our view on the semantics of proper names. For example, whether we conceive of names that have more than one bearer as semantically ambiguous, or whether we conceive of names in principle as indexical or context-sensitive expressions. Thirdly, it seems to be ad hoc to postulate this kind of extension of meaning transfer, and it is questionable whether this kind of approach can be generalized in a systematic way. There seem to be no independent paradigmatic and uncontroversial examples of the application of this kind of mechanism, and therefore there is the danger of trivializing and overgeneralizing the explanatory function of the proposed variety of meaning transfer.

However, there is a more moderate and reasonable way to complement Nunberg's conception of meaning transfer and in this case there are also additional and independent examples of the application of this additional mechanism that seem to vindicate the plausibility of this complementation. In the case of several expressions, the truth-conditional meaning seems to be only one aspect of their meaning: Many expressions also seem to have an additional conventional, presuppositional or use-conditional meaning.²⁷ Against this background, we may introduce a slightly different variant of meaning transfer that holds that it is possible to derive a new truth-conditional meaning of a certain expression from an already existing conventional, presuppositional or use-conditional meaning of this expression.

Proper names and *third person personal pronouns* have a similar derived predicative use. In the remaining part of this section I will argue for two main theses: Firstly, there are similar reasons to assign third person personal pronouns and proper names a specific additional conventional, presuppositional or use-conditional meaning apart from their truth-conditional meaning. Secondly, there are specific lexical rules that allow us to derive a new truth-conditional meaning for the predicative use of proper names and third person personal pronouns from the additional conventional, presuppositional or use-conditional meaning of these expressions according to their primary meaning.

Let me justify the claim that *third person personal pronouns* like 'he' and 'she' have like proper names a referential and a derived predicative use, by means of examples of these uses. The following sentences provide examples of both uses of 'she'/'her':

(14) She is a nice person.

(15) Leslie is a her/she, but not a him/he.²⁸

²⁷ See for example: Hawthorne and Manley (2012, chap. 4–6), Predelli (2013).

²⁸ I have found evidence for both kinds of derived predicative uses of the pronouns 'she' and 'he'.

In the sentence (14) ‘she’ is used as a singular referring expression, in the sentence (15) ‘she’/‘her’ is used as a predicate that is semantically equivalent with the predicate ‘is female’. In this respect, there is an obvious parallel between the sentences (14) and (15) that contain the pronoun ‘she’/‘her’ and sentences like the following that contain the proper name ‘Alfred’:

- (1) Alfred is a nice guy.
 (16) He is an Alfred, but not a Paul.

From a methodological point of view, it would be a virtue if we could provide a uniform explanation that captures both derived predicative uses in an analogous way. The viability of such an account highly depends on which analysis of the truth-conditions of sentences like (14) and (1) we favour and which role we assign to the conditions expressed by ‘is female’ and ‘is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ in respect to the determination of the referent of the pronoun ‘she’ and the name ‘Alfred’.

Let me now argue for the thesis that there are similar reasons to assign a specific additional conventional, presuppositional or use-conditional meaning to names and third personal pronouns.

There is a big dispute between different philosophers concerning the correct truth-conditional analysis of a sentence like (14). This dispute is especially about the role that is played by the condition expressed by the predicate ‘is female’ concerning the determination of the semantic referent of ‘she’. All the parties agree that this condition plays some determining or constraining role, but it is disputed *whether* and *in which way* it contributes to the truth-conditions of a sentence like (14). Different proposals have been made to specify claims that are truth-conditionally equivalent to (14). Here are the most prominent candidates that have been suggested in the relevant literature:

- (14.1) That₁ is female and it₁ is a nice person.²⁹
 (14.2) [The x: x is female and x = that]³⁰ is a nice person.³¹
 (14.3) dthat([The x: x is female and x = that])³² is a nice person.³³
 (14.4) That, who is female,³⁴ is a nice person.³⁵
 (14.5) That is a nice person.

²⁹ This view is based on the view of Richard (1993) on complex demonstratives. Cf. Corazza (2002, 178–179).

³⁰ This account can be combined with different possible treatments of semantics of the definite article.

³¹ This view is based on the view of Lepore and Ludwig (2000) on complex demonstratives. Cf. Corazza (2002, 176).

³² Kaplan’s famous dthat-operator has a similar contribution to truth-condition as the combined modifiers ‘actual’ and ‘present’. That is, ‘dthat(the president of Germany)’ is truth-conditionally equivalent with ‘the actual and present president of Germany’. Cf.: Kaplan (1989[1977], 546).

³³ This view is based on the view of Braun (1994), Borg (2000) on complex demonstratives. Cf.: Corazza (2002, 178).

³⁴ This is a *non-restrictive relative clause* that seems to contribute to the propositional content expressed by a sentence in a similar, indirect way as an *appositional* use of ‘the winner of the Tour de France in 2007’. Cf.: Corazza (2002, 179) and Potts (2005, 13–14; 49–51).

³⁵ Cf.: Corazza (2002, 183, 189).

The accounts that rely on (14.1)–(14.3) share the intuition *that* the condition of being female contributes to the truth-conditions of the sentence (14), but they disagree *how* it contributes. The views that make use of (14.4) and (14.5) reject the claim that this condition contributes to the (literal) truth-conditions of the sentence (14).

The view based on (14.4) holds that a sentence like (14) expresses two different propositions: the official and the background proposition. The official proposition is the very same as that which is expressed by (14.5). The background proposition is the proposition that is expressed by ‘That is female’ if it is used in very same context as (14.5). According to this account, the truth-value of (14) only depends on the truth-value of the official proposition. Following Potts,³⁶ we may hence claim that the pronoun ‘she’ triggers specific *conventional implicatures*, whose contents are captured by the mentioned background proposition and a pronoun like ‘she’, therefore, has a specific additional non-truth-conditional meaning that relates a sentence like (14) with a specific content that contains the condition of being female.

A view that holds that (14) and (14.5) are truth-conditionally equivalent can be defended in at least two different ways. Such a view can either assume that the condition of being female is part of the presuppositional or the use-conditional meaning of (14). According to the first variant, (14) and (14.5) literally *express* the very same and only one proposition, but only (14) also *presupposes* the truth of the claim ‘That is female’. Therefore, there is a difference in presuppositional meaning between (14) and (14.5). The second view holds the same thesis about the *expressed* proposition, but it also denies that a specific propositional content is *presupposed* by the sentence (14). According to this view, the difference in meaning between (14) and (14.5) does not concern the contents expressed or presupposed by (14), but the contexts of use relative to which both sentences can be used in a semantically correct way. The use-conditions of an expression restricts the set of all possible contexts of use of this expression to the set of all semantically correct contexts of use.³⁷ A use of ‘she’ relative to a certain context of use is *immaculate* if ‘she’ is used to refer to an object that is female. According to this view, there are also semantically correct uses of ‘she’ relative to which (a) ‘she’ does not refer to anything or (b) to an object that is not female. But not every use of kind (a) and (b) is semantically correct. A referential use of ‘she’ that fails to refer to an object is only then semantically correct, if a demonstrative act of identification is performed by the user of ‘she’ that fails to identify an object. A referential use of ‘she’ that refers to an object *o* that is not female is only then semantically correct if the user of ‘she’ (erroneously) presupposes or believes that the object *o* is female. (14) and (14.5) are truth-conditionally equivalent, but there are different use-conditions that are associated with ‘she’ and ‘that’. And in this respect the two expressions have different meanings.

The two views based on (14.5) and the view based on (14.4) seem to be closely related and it is *prima facie* not clear whether there are only terminological or actually significant differences between these views. For our purposes here, these differences are not relevant. The two main issues that are relevant for our concern are the following: Firstly, is it possible to transfer the distinguished approaches concerning the analysis of

³⁶ Cf.: Potts (2005).

³⁷ Cf.: Predelli (2013, 26–30).

(14) in a meaningful way to sentences that contain proper names like (1)? Secondly, can we provide convincing reasons that favour an analysis that assigns a truth-conditional and an additional non-truth-conditional meaning to third person personal pronouns and proper names over one of the mentioned purely truth-conditional approaches?

Let us address the first issue at first. Two adaptations are required if we aim to transform those sentences that we listed as proposals of claims that are truth-conditionally equivalent to (14) into corresponding claims that might be conceived as truth-conditionally equivalent to (1). Firstly, we need to substitute the condition expressed by 'is female' with the condition expressed by 'is a bearer of the name 'Alfred''. Secondly, we need to find an adequate substitute for 'that'. The referents of a proper name relative to a context of use are at least *not necessarily* determined by a demonstrative act of identification like the referents of 'that'. One option would be to use *unbound variables* as a substitute for 'that'. We can thereby remain neutral concerning the correct mechanisms of the determination of the referents of a proper name. On this basis, we can also leave the meta-semantic issue whether such semantically correct referents can be fixed by means of different kinds of mechanism or only one specific mechanism completely open.³⁸ We also could alternatively use some *atomic indexical constants* that are introduced on the level of logical form for a similar purpose. Let us, for the sake of simplicity, stick with the unbound variables and use them as a *place-holder* for some adequate formal representation on the level of logical form that allows us to remain neutral in this essay concerning the exact nature of the reference determining mechanism in the case of proper names. On the basis of this provisional assumption, we can now reformulate the distinguished accounts concerning (14) in the following way such that they can be applied to (1):

- (1.1) y_1 is a bearer of the name 'Alfred' and y_1 is a nice guy.
- (1.2) [The x : x is a bearer of the name 'Alfred' and $x = y$] is a nice guy.
- (1.3) d that([The x : x is a bearer of the name 'Alfred' and $x = y$]) is a nice guy.
- (1.4) y , who is a bearer of the name 'Alfred', is a nice guy.
- (1.5) y is a nice guy.

The accounts based on (1.2) and (1.3) have been explicitly defended in the relevant literature.³⁹ We can also find accounts that closely resemble (1.5).⁴⁰ This shows that there are at least some people who tried to assimilate the semantics of names and third person personal pronouns and that at least shows that our project has at least some *prima facie* plausibility.

Let us now show why some of the proposed accounts in the case of third person personal pronouns and names have implausible consequences and that there are reasons that clearly favour *use-conditional accounts* in both cases.

There are similar arguments that can be used against the accounts based on (14.1)/(1.1) and (14.2)/(1.2). These accounts predict that (14) implies the following claim (17) and that (1) implies the following claim (18):

³⁸ Cf.: Rami (2014b).

³⁹ Cf.: Burge (1973), Elbourne (2005).

⁴⁰ Cf.: Dever (1998), Cumming (2008).

- (17) That/She is female.
 (18) Alfred is a bearer of the name 'Alfred'.

But these are implausible consequences. There are possible worlds in respect to which (14) or (1) are true, but (17) or (18) are false. An actual female person might undergo a gender reassignment. The name of an actual bearer of the name 'Alfred' may change. These two accounts also predicate that the following claims are necessary truths:

- (19) If she exists, then she is female.
 (20) If Alfred exists, then Alfred is a bearer of the name 'Alfred'.

But these consequences are also implausible for the very same reasons. Furthermore, the accounts based on (14.2) and (1.2) are implausible, because they conceive of the pronoun 'she' and the name 'Alfred' only as weakly rigid designators.⁴¹ Given this, we cannot account for the intuitive truth-values of the following sentences:

- (21) It is possible that she is not female.
 (22) It is possible that Alfred is not a bearer of the name 'Alfred'.

If 'she'/'Alfred' is a weakly rigid designator of the actual object *o*, this expression only refers in respect to those possible worlds to *o* relative to which *o* is female/a bearer of the name 'Alfred'.

All three problems can be blocked by rigidifying the name-bearer-condition in (14.1)/(14.2) and (1.1)/(1.2) by means of the modifier 'actual'. But such an adaptation would at least be an ad hoc reaction to our problem and needs some good and independent motivation.

A purely truth-conditional account based on (14.3) and (1.3) does not share the mentioned modal problems, but it has a similar unwelcome consequence concerning entailments. We can define a specific notion of entailment that concerns the contents of indexical sentences relative to specific contexts of use and that assumes that Δ entails α iff for every context of use *c*: If Δ is true relative to *c*, then α is true relative to *c*.⁴² If we apply this notion to the sentences pairs $\langle(14), (17)\rangle$ and $\langle(1), (18)\rangle$ on the background of (14.3) and (1.3), this entailment relation obtains between the members of these pairs. It also seems to be counterintuitive, that this kind of entailment is guaranteed by the truth-conditional meaning of 'she' and 'Alfred'.⁴³

There are also additional reasons that speak against *all* the mentioned purely truth-conditional accounts and in favour of accounts that assign a use-conditional meaning to third person personal pronouns and names.

Case 1: Intuitively, we can use a pronoun like 'she' to refer in a semantically correct way to a hermaphrodite or a female-identified transsexual person if the user of this pronoun at least presupposes that the object to which he refers is female.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Cf.: Hawthorne and Manley (2012, 11).

⁴² Cf.: Predelli (2013, 13–14).

⁴³ Cf.: Predelli (2013, 186–187).

⁴⁴ Cf.: Corazza (2002, 173–175).

We cannot account for these uses in semantic terms on the basis of all mentioned purely truth-conditional accounts. These accounts predict that relative to the outlined scenario the use of ‘she’ does not have a semantic referent.⁴⁵

Two similar cases can be construed in the case of proper names:

Case 2: A person S mistakenly thinks that somebody is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’. S’s false belief is based on a misunderstood or false information about the name of this person. S uses the name ‘Alfred’ to refer to this person and he makes an intuitively true statement by uttering (1).

Case 3: A person aims to introduce ‘Alfred’ as a new name for a certain object that does not yet have a name. He uses the sentence (1) with the intention to establish a new name for a certain object to which he refers by means of ‘Alfred’ and may make an intuitively true statement by uttering (1) in such a context of use.

All these cases are in an important respect different from a famous related case introduced by Kripke.⁴⁶ In Kripke’s case, a person uses the name ‘Jones’ to refer to a certain object named ‘Smith’ that this person confuses with a bearer of the name ‘Jones’. Hence, there are two relevant objects in play and probably also two conflicting referential intentions. Therefore, one might claim in such a case that there is a semantic referent and a speaker’s referent of the use of the name ‘Smith’. In our two name-cases there is only one relevant object that could plausibly be conceived of as the *referent* of the name ‘Alfred’. And I do not see any good reason why we should claim in such a case that the use of ‘Alfred’ in both mentioned contexts has no semantic referent, but only a speaker’s referent. Hence, I do not see why we should conceive of the error that is made in *Case 1* and *Case 2* as an example of *semantic incompetence*. Furthermore, the user of ‘Alfred’ in *Case 3* does not make any kind of mistake. Our alternative account seems to offer a more economical and plausible description of these correct but not immaculate uses of third person personal pronouns and names.⁴⁷

The mentioned scenarios provide good reasons to favour an account that assigns an additional use-conditional meaning to third person personal pronouns and proper names over the mentioned alternative and purely truth-conditional accounts. The best way to capture the mentioned data is provided by a *use-conditional* account that assigns specific use-conditions to the pronoun ‘she’ and a name like ‘Alfred’. There are two important differences between the use-conditional meaning of ‘she’ and ‘Alfred’. There are similar conditions for an immaculate use in both cases. A use of the proper name ‘Alfred’ relative to a context of use *c* is immaculate iff ‘Alfred’ is used to refer in a semantically correct way to a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ in respect to *c*. But there are differences concerning the non-immaculate, but semantically correct uses, because there seem to be different semantically correct reference determining mechanisms in the case of third person personal pronouns and a proper names. We will leave it open in this essay, which mechanisms can be used to determine the referent of a use of a proper names in a

⁴⁵ Cf.: Corazza (2002, 175–179).

⁴⁶ Cf.: Kripke (1977, 263).

⁴⁷ Cf.: Corazza (2002, 191).

semantically correct way. Therefore, we cannot fill out the exact details in this respect. So we can only say schematically: A referential use of ‘Alfred’ relative to a context of use *c* that refers to no object is only adequate if the user makes use of a mechanism of identification of an object that is semantically correct in the case of names and this mechanism fails to identify a single object. Furthermore, there seem to be at least two different semantically correct referential uses of a name like ‘Alfred’ according to which the user of this name refers to an object *o* that isn’t an actual and present bearer of this name, namely if this user presupposes that *o* is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ or if this user presupposes that *o* is not a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’, but he intends to establish *o* as a new bearer of the name ‘Alfred’.

Against the background of such a similar semantic treatment of third person personal pronouns and proper names that assigns to both expressions a truth-conditional and a use-conditional layer of meaning, we can postulate a specific linguistic mechanism of meaning transfer that allows us to derive a new truth-conditional meaning of these expressions from a primary use-conditional meaning of these expressions in a uniform way. The conditions expressed by ‘is female’ and ‘is a bearer of the name ‘N’ play an important constraining role to distinguish semantically correct from semantically incorrect uses of these expressions. There seem to be *lexical rules* that allow us to transfer these specific *constraining conditions* from the use-conditional to the truth-conditional level of meaning; and thereby allow us to use both expressions as predicates with a truth-conditional meaning that directly represents these constraining conditions. We can formulate these two related lexical rules in the following way:

- (G5) If the third person personal pronoun ‘she’ is used as a singular referring expression that has the condition expressed by ‘is female’ as a constraining constituent of its use-conditional meaning, then ‘she’ can also be used as a predicate that is truth-conditionally equivalent with ‘is female’.⁴⁸
- (G6) If a noun ‘N’ is used as a name that has the condition expressed by ‘bearer of the name ‘N’ as a constraining constituent of its use-conditional meaning, then ‘N’ can also be used as a predicate that is truth-conditionally equivalent with ‘bearer of the name ‘N’.

These two examples show that there are different fruitful applications of our proposed alternative mechanism of use-conditional meaning transfer. Furthermore, we can account on the basis of (G6) for the fact that the instances of (PE) are semantic equivalences although they are significantly different from semantic equivalences like (E1)–(E3).

But these two examples aren’t the only examples of application for this additional mechanism of meaning transfer that one can mention. A similar meaning transfer seems to be operative in the case of the interjection ‘oops’. This expression has according to its primary use only a use-conditional meaning and does not make any significant contribution to the truth-conditions of a sentence relative to this use. The following sentence:

⁴⁸ It seems to be possible to generalize this lexical rule in the following way: (G5*) If a third person personal pronoun ‘N’ is used as a singular referring expression that has the condition expressed by ‘is F’ as a constraining constituent of its use-conditional meaning, then ‘N’ can also be used as a predicate that is truth-conditionally equivalent with ‘is F’.

(23) Oops, the vase fell from the mantelpiece,

has the very same truth-conditions as the sentence ‘The vase fell from the mantelpiece’. But (23) has different use-conditions than the latter sentence. It is only adequate to use (23) relative to a context of use where the agent of this context of use witnessed a minor mishap relative to the possible world of the context of use at some time immediately before the time of the context of use.⁴⁹ Additionally to this primary use of the expression ‘oops’ as an interjection, this expression also has a derived predicative use. A sentence like the following provides an example of this sort⁵⁰:

(24) That is not an oops, it is a major disaster.

In a sentence like (24) the expression ‘is an oops’ is used as semantically equivalent with ‘is a minor mishap’. It is very plausible to assume that this derived predicative use of the expression ‘oops’ is also the result of a use-conditional meaning transfer.

Our proposed distinction between two different variants of the general linguistic phenomenon of the derivation meaning that are based on two different mechanisms of meaning transfer seem to be the best available way to account for the intuition that proper nouns can have different derived meanings and that the meaning of the predicate ‘Alfred’ relative to its use in (2) or (16) is in some specific way derived from the meaning of the name ‘Alfred’.⁵¹

In the case of lexical truth-conditional meaning transfer it was clear that we do not only establish a new meaning of an expression, but we also thereby create a *polysemic* expression that has two different truth-conditional meanings that are systematically related by means of a transfer relation that obtains between members

⁴⁹ Cf.: Predelli (2013, 68).

⁵⁰ This example was pointed out to me by an anonymous referee.

⁵¹ An anonymous referee objected to my proposed alternative mechanism of use-conditional meaning transfer that it leads to an overgeneralisation of the availability of derived predicative expressions. For example, someone might argue that in the case of indexical expressions like ‘I’ or ‘you’ it also seems to be plausible to assume an additional use-conditional component of meaning besides their truth-conditional meaning. Hence, one may claim that it is only then adequate to use the expression ‘I’ (‘you’) relative to a context of use if one refers to the speaker of the context of use (the addressee of the context of use) by means of this expression. But interestingly there are no predicative uses of ‘I’ and ‘you’ that are similar to the mentioned predicative uses of ‘he’ and ‘she’. I cannot meaningfully say, ‘There are lots of I/s/mes here’ and thereby mean, ‘There are a lots of speakers here’. And I also cannot meaningfully say ‘There are lots of yous here’ and thereby mean ‘There are lots of addressees here’. Someone might now claim in the light of the absence of such derived predicative uses of certain indexical expressions that it is doubtful that our proposed alternative mechanism of meaning transfer exists at all. But this objection is based on a misunderstanding. Firstly and most importantly, I didn’t claim that every expression that has a use-conditional meaning that constrains the adequate contexts of use of such an expression *automatically* also has an additional derived predicative use whose truth-conditional content is determined by some component of the original constraining condition. It requires an established use of competent speakers that exploits the use-conditional meaning of a certain expression in the described way. And only if such an established use is conventionalized by a lexical rule like (G5) or (G6), a genuine form of lexical meaning transfer from the use-conditional to the truth-conditional level is established. Secondly, one might doubt in the case of the (automatic) indexical ‘I’ and ‘you’ whether the mentioned speaker- and addressee-conditions are really part of the use-conditional meaning of such an expression. It seems in their case more plausible to conceive of these conditions as part of the Kaplanian-character of these expressions.

of the extensions that correspond with these two different truth-conditional meanings. Relative to our new variant of meaning transfer, we now have a different form of polysemy because we have postulated a systematic transfer from the use-conditional meaning of the pronoun ‘she’ and the name ‘Alfred’ to the truth-conditional meaning of the predicate ‘she’ and ‘Alfred’ on the basis of a specific lexical rule that does not exploit some sort of transfer relation. We may therefore call our proposed alternative view a *use-conditional polysemy view concerning the original predicative uses of proper names*.⁵²

4 Why the Predicate View is Not a Plausible Alternative

The remaining main contender of our proposed account concerning the original predicative uses of a proper noun like ‘Alfred’ in (2) is the so-called *predicate view on proper names*. The predicate view also claims that there are systematic semantic connections between the meaning of ‘Alfred’ in (1) and (2), but it explains these connections in a different way. According to it, the best way to account for systematic semantic connections is to conceive of the noun ‘Alfred’ relative to both uses as a predicate with the same truth-conditional contribution on the level of logical form. To account for the specific referential use of ‘Alfred’ in (1) on this basis, defenders of the predicate view postulate a hidden determiner (at the level of logical form) that either alone or in combination with certain other hidden restrictive elements accounts for the intuition that ‘Alfred’ in (1) is a singular referring expression. I will now focus on this alternative strategy in more detail and compare my proposed view with this alternative view to show that my strategy is the more plausible of these two opposing views.

What are the main reasons why the defender of the predicate view thinks that his approach offers the best explanation of the proposed systematic semantic connections? Firstly, defenders of the predicate view have argued for such an account on the basis of methodological reasons.⁵³ A uniform semantic explanation of different uses of a certain expression is from a methodological point of view better than a non-uniform explanation. Therefore, the explanation offered by the predicate view seems to be superior to any alternative non-uniform explanation. Granted, uniformity is a virtue if the proposed uniform explanation is also materially adequate. But there also can be simple and uniform explanations that do not capture the data in an adequate way. In such a case uniformity is no virtue at all.

⁵² There is one problem that seems to indicate that our formulation of the lexical rule that regulates the original predicative uses of proper nouns in natural language might need further adaptations. In the case of names for persons, we can distinguish first-names and family-names. Sometimes if we use the corresponding predicates of these names in generalisations like, ‘Every Alfred that I met in school was a fool’, or, ‘Every Smith is a bearer of a widespread family-name,’ we use these predicates in a more restricted sense. Relative to such uses ‘is an Alfred’ is equivalent to ‘is a bearer of the first-name ‘Alfred’ and ‘is a Smith’ is equivalent to ‘is a bearer of the family-name ‘Smith’’. We can regard these uses as examples of quantifier domain restriction or we might adapt the rule (G6) in such a way that first and family names are treated in different ways. I just wanted to mention this problem here and leave it to future research.

⁵³ Cf.: Burge (1973), Elbourne (2005), Sawyer (2010).

I will try to show in the following why the proposed uniform explanation is not adequate.

However, if we do not only focus on the original examples of predicative uses of proper nouns, but also on the other mentioned additional examples the situation changes. Our proposed account of the different mentioned predicative uses assumes that there is one primary use of a proper noun like ‘Alfred’, namely its use as a *proper name*. Additionally, there are two kinds of derived predicative uses of proper nouns that are established by two different mechanisms of meaning transfer.⁵⁴ These two mechanisms share the common feature that they can both establish specific lexical rules. The defender of the predicate view treats our original examples as non-derived uses and hence in a completely different way than the additional examples, which he also has to conceive of as derived uses. Our approach treats referential and non-referential uses of proper nouns in a different way, but it nevertheless seems to offer a nice explanation of how all the multiple uses of proper nouns are systematically connected. So it seems uniformity is not really a virtue that the predicate view can claim for itself.

Defenders of the predicate view also have provided certain non-methodological reasons for their alternative view. Let us focus on two of these reasons now in more detail, because they reveal certain advantages of our proposed account. Firstly, some people have argued that the predicate view offers the best explanation of the mentioned systematic semantic connections between the original predicative uses and the referential uses of proper nouns, because it offers the best way to account for certain intuitively valid arguments that contain both uses.⁵⁵ These are inferences like the following:

Alfred is a nice guy.

There is at least one Alfred.

Every Alfred is a nice guy.

Alfred is a nice guy.

These inferences are intuitively valid and that requires an explanation. Some defenders of the predicate view hold that the best explanation can be given by a uniform predicative semantic treatment of the noun ‘Alfred’ relative to its multiple uses in these arguments. But this thesis seems to be false. Granted, we can only account for the validity of the first argument *in purely logical terms* if we make use of some version of the predicate view like, for example, the version that holds that (1) is semantically equivalent with (1.2). But we cannot account for the logical validity of the second argument in the same way in purely logical terms unless we

⁵⁴ These two mechanisms differ in the way how they establish a new derived meaning, but both mechanisms share the feature that they produce as a result certain more or less specific lexical rules that conventionalize the meaning transfer.

⁵⁵ Cf.: Hornsby (1976, 229), Elugardo (2002, 476), Sawyer (2010, 207).

assume implausible Aristotelian truth-conditions for ‘Every Alfred is a nice guy’.⁵⁶ There seems to be a better strategy to account for the intuitive validity of these arguments: they are intuitively valid, but not logically valid, because they are enthymematic. They can be turned into logically valid arguments if we explicitly add the following tacit premise:

(25) Alfred is an Alfred.

Furthermore, it is not necessary to interpret this additional premise in the way that is proposed by the predicative view. Even a standard analysis of the two given arguments accompanied with (25) on the basis of first-order predicate logic allows us to account for the logical validity of such kind of arguments.

We have seen that it is an implausible consequence of an account based on (1.2) or any similar predicative treatment of names that they predict that (1) implies (18) or the truth-conditionally equivalent claim (25). Therefore, such an account at least should provide some adaptations that block these implausible consequences. But then defenders of the predicate view cannot account for the validity of the mentioned arguments in the desired way anymore. This shows that our proposed alternative explanation of the validity of the mentioned arguments seems to be in general the better one.

There is a second reason that certain defenders of the predicate view have proposed in favour of their uniform analysis.⁵⁷ It directly concerns the correct analysis of the truth-conditions of a sentence like (25). A sentence like (25) seems to express an obvious truth relative to normal conditions of its use. According to the predicate view, the best explanation of this datum is provided by a uniform predicative semantic treatment of ‘Alfred’ in (25) that assimilates the truth-conditions of (25) to the truth-conditions of claims like the following:

(26) The/that bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’.

Why is a sentence like (26) only an obvious truth relative to normal conditions of its use? There are also contexts of use where a name like ‘Alfred’ may fail to refer to a single individual. For similar reasons (25) is also only true relative to those (normal) contexts of its use relative to which ‘Alfred’ refers to something.

Granted, the predicate view provides an account that can explain why (25) is an obvious truth relative to normal conditions of its use, but it seems to be the wrong account. This account has the implausible consequence that a conditional like (20) comes out as a necessary truth. Furthermore, it cannot account for the rigidity of names in semantic terms. Therefore, it seems to be again necessary to rigidify the alleged predicative component of the name ‘Alfred’ in (1) and (25). On the basis of this modification, the predicate view can still account for the fact why (25) is in a certain sense an obvious truth under normal conditions of use, because a claim like (25) remains true according to this modification relative to every context of use in

⁵⁶ According to such an analysis, a universal generalisation of the form ‘Every F is G’ implies ‘Something is an F’.

⁵⁷ Cf.: Burge (1973, 429).

respect to the *actual* world relative to which ‘Alfred’ has a referent. That is one way to account for the obvious truth of (25) under normal conditions of use, but it has the same above mentioned, independent problems as the rigidified version of (1.2). We, on the other hand, can provide an alternative explanation of the obvious truth of (25) under normal conditions of use if we identify normal conditions of use of the name ‘Alfred’ with *immaculate uses* of this name. A similar explanation can be given on the basis of the mentioned two alternative use-conditional accounts. In the light of the mentioned problems that any version of the predicate view shares with the rigidified version of (1.2), this alternative account seems to be preferable.

There are also other reasons that defenders of the predicate view have provided in favour of their view that cannot be addressed in this essay. These reasons concern (a) apparent anaphoric bound uses of proper names,⁵⁸ (b) the semantic analysis of modified proper names like ‘the poet Goethe’,⁵⁹ (c) the cross-linguistic data that in certain languages it is obligatory to use proper names in combination with a definite article.⁶⁰ In my opinion, there are plausible ways to undermine these proposed reasons in favour of the predicate view, but I cannot show this in this essay. However, let me finally point out *two problems* for the predicate view that are based on certain observations we made in this essay.

Firstly, it seems to be an undeniable fact that acts of naming are one, but not the only way to introduce a new name for a certain object. A series of unchallenged and stable referential uses of a name that refer to the same object might have the very same consequence as an explicit act of naming. Therefore, certain referential uses of a name like ‘Alfred’ can partially or fully determine the extension of the predicate ‘is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’’. The predicate view has problems accounting for this data in a plausible way. It must admit that there are *specific acceptable non-literal* referential uses of a name relative to which the reference of this name is *not* partially determined by the notion expressed by ‘is an Alfred’ or ‘is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’’ in opposition to literal uses of names. Furthermore, they must admit that such non-literal uses can (partially) determine the extension of the predicate ‘is an Alfred’, or ‘is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’’, if they lead to the introduction of a new name. The combination of these two assumptions is intuitively implausible. Our alternative view holds that the condition expressed by ‘is a bearer of the name ‘Alfred’’ is only a constituent of the use-conditional, but not the truth-conditional meaning of a proper name. Against this background, we are able to account for this implicit way of introducing a new name in a more plausible and smooth way. According to our view, it is perfectly acceptable to refer to an object by means of a name that is not the bearer of this name if such a use has the purpose to introduce a new name.

Secondly, we have argued for the thesis that a predicate like ‘is a Picasso’ has three different literal meanings that are established by three different lexical rules. According to the predicate view, this predicate is a semantic constituent of the proper name ‘Picasso’, because names are represented on the level of logical form

⁵⁸ Cf.: Elbourne (2005, 180–181), Matushansky (2008, 600–603).

⁵⁹ Cf.: Matushansky (2008, 603–609).

⁶⁰ Cf.: Matushansky (2008, 597); Hawthorne and Manley (2012, 220–221).

as complex determiner phrases that contain such predicates. But on this basis it seems to be the case that the ambiguity of the predicate ‘Picasso’ leads to an implausible ambiguity of the *name* ‘Picasso’.⁶¹ It is unacceptable to hold the view that a name like ‘Picasso’ can be used in a semantically correct way to refer to a certain painting of Picasso or a certain member of a specific Picasso family whether or not it bears the name ‘Picasso’. But how should the predicate view on the basis of the given assumptions about the logical form of the name ‘Picasso’ account for a restriction to exactly one meaning of the contained predicate ‘Picasso’ that would have the consequence that this name can *only* be used in a semantically correct way to refer to a bearer of this name? There doesn’t seem to be a plausible way to argue for such a restriction on the basis of the given assumptions. But it would also be implausible to assume that the predicate ‘Picasso’ has only one literal meaning.

In response to this problem, a defender of the predicate view could postulate a *specific* determiner that has no overt counterpart in natural language and can only be combined with a predicate that has a specific meaning.⁶² Firstly, normally determiners can be combined with any expression of a certain semantic type, whatever the specific meaning of such an expression is. It seems to be ad hoc to postulate a determiner that is sensitive to a specific meaning of an expression of a certain semantic type. Secondly, as already mentioned, defenders of the predicate view often justify their view by pointing out that there are natural languages, where the use of a proper name together with the definite article is either optional or even obligatory. The mentioned response would undermine the significance of this kind of data. Thirdly, it also seems to be mysterious why we cannot substitute ‘Alfred’ and ‘bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ in (1) *salva congruitate* on the basis of the given assumptions of the predicate view. In this case the postulation of a specific determiner that is sensitive to the meaning of a nominal expression and that has no overt counterpart in natural language would be of no use at all, because the predicate view is also committed to the (plausible) view that ‘Alfred’ and ‘bearer of the name ‘Alfred’ are semantically equivalent relative to the use of ‘Alfred’ exemplified by (2). A defender of this view might in the light of this additional problem postulate the existence of a determiner that can only be combined with an item of the specific syntactic category of proper nouns if this expression is used with a specific meaning. But such a move seems to be equally questionable and ad hoc. In my opinion, these observations are a clear indication that the view proposed by the predicate view concerning original predicative uses is incorrect and that our alternative proposal is more plausible.

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⁶¹ A similar observation is attributed in Hawthorne and Manley (2012, 229) to Aidan Gray.

⁶² Aidan Gray suggested this reply to me in personal communication.

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