On an Alleged Counterexample to Predicativism

Delia Graff Fara
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**Predicativism:** Names are type \(<e,t>\).

\[
\llbracket 'N' \rrbracket = \{ x : x \text{ is called } N \} \quad \text{“The Being-called Condition” (A Schema)}
\]

\[
\llbracket N \rrbracket = \{ x : x \text{ has } N \text{ as a name} \} \quad \text{“The Name-Having Condition” (A Universal Generalization)}
\]

**Referentialism:** Names are type \(e\).

\[
\llbracket N \rrbracket = \text{the referent of } N \quad \text{“The Kripke/Kaplan Condition”}
\]

BCC-friendly examples (Jeshion’s term):

1. I’ve loved three Michaels;
2. I’ve loved every Michael that I’ve ever met;
3. Michaels usually have conservative parents;
4. The taller Michael is teaching metaphysics this year;
5. Which Michael said that? You mean my Michael?

KKC-friendly examples:

6. I love Michael;

\[ \Rightarrow \text{Any sentence with names occurring only as bare singulars in argument position.} \]

(Bare meaning *no determiner*, as in “bare plural”)

What do predicativists say about KKC-friendly examples?

\[ \Rightarrow \text{They posit a hidden determiner.} \]

\[
(6')
\]

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I
   \- love
      \- DP
         \- \(\emptyset\_\text{the}\) Michael
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What do referentialists say about BCC-friendly examples???

That’s the million-dollar question!

• The Alleged Counterexample to Predicativism (Boër 1975)

(7) Joe Romanov, my barber, is not a Romanov;
(8) Waldo Cox, my gardener, is a Romanov.

[ ['Romanov'] ] = \{ x : x \text{ is a member of the last imperial family of Russia} \}
\neq \{ x : x \text{ is called Romanov} \}

• Two ways for the example not to be a counterexample

Fara: The facts of the example are compatible with Predicativism. (MS, 2015)

Jeshion: The facts of the example, together with other facts, show that Predicativism is ill-motivated. (2015a, 2015b)

• The other facts: Lots of BCC-unfriendly examples.

Burge’s “Metaphorical” Examples: (1973)

(9) Dick Cheney is a real Machiavelli (not Burge’s, obviously);
(10) George Wallace is a Napoleon.

Boër’s Family Examples: (1975)

(11) Waldo Cox (my gardener) is a Romanov;
(12) Joe Romanov (my barber) is not a Romanov;
(13) Many Kennedys have died tragically. (King 2006)
**Jeshion’s Producer Examples** (2015a)

(14) There are two Stellas inside the museum.
(15) No Stella is better than any Picasso.
(16) Some Gehrys are well constructed; some aren’t.

**Jeshion’s Representation Examples** (2015a, 2015b)

(17) There were three Obamas at the Halloween party (costumes).
(18) We have three Bachs but no Mozarts (busts).
(19) The Hepburn is amazing, but the Cher is weak (wax statues).

**Jeshion’s Resemblance Examples** (2015a, 2015b)

(20) Here comes Lena with her two little Lenas (daughters not named Lena).
(21) I wish I had a whole classroom full of Adrians (students like Adrian).

**Jeshion’s (2015a) Claims:**

a. Given the wealth of BCC-unfriendly examples there are that contain a name in the count-noun position of a determiner phrase, the predicativist cannot claim to have a given an especially unified semantic treatment of names.

b. But uniformity is the Predicativism’s main selling point against Referentialism.

c. So that point in its favor retains its value only if the predicativist can justify her choice of which predicative examples to unify.

**My (2015) Reaction:**

a. Predicativists don’t have to justify their reasons for choosing the theory they’ve chosen to defend.

b. They just have to defend the theory itself, which they can.
   
   a. Producer and Representation examples are instances of deferred interpretation (à la Nunberg (1995)), a type of figurative use that other nouns (and adjectives) exhibit.

   b. Resemblance examples (which include, actually, Burge’s “metaphoric” examples) involve a type of figurative use that other nouns (and adjectives) exhibit.
c. Romanov examples are different, in that they don’t involve figurative uses of language. Rather they involve an ambiguity between a word used as a name (therefore true of bearers of the name) and a word use as a capitalized common noun that’s true of members of a certain family.

(22) Hominid (my cat) is not a Hominid. ⇒ The common-noun reading is true; the name reading is false.

(23) My barber and my piano teacher are both Romanovs, but they’re unrelated. He’s Joe; she’s Larissa.

Jeshion’s (2015c) Reaction:

a. Those weren’t meant as counterexamples!

b. They were meant to show that the predicativist hasn’t really given a unified theory unless she can justify why her choice about which examples to unify is the right one.

My reaction (take two):

a. Predicativists don’t think that uniformity is a theoretical virtue per se. Theoretical simplicity is the virtue, and it’s generally promoted by uniformity, though it needn’t be.

b. As a defender of Predicativism my job is to deal with any proposed counterexamples and explain why my theory is simpler and more explanatorily powerful than any competitors that may come its way.

More on my views about Romanov examples:

Names are a species of count noun that meet specific syntactic and semantic criteria.

**Syntactic:** Common count nouns are distinguished from common mass nouns in a number of ways:

a. They can occur in the plural;
   
   (24) Students are sharp;
   
   (25) * Cutleries are sharp.

b. They can’t occur as bare singulars;
   
   (26) * Student is useful;
   
   (27) Cutlery is useful.

c. They cannot combine with mass “determiners” such as ‘much’ and ‘less’.
   
   (28) * How much student is there in your logic class?
   
   (29) How much tomfoolery is there in your logic class?
   
   (30) How many students are there in your logic class?
(31) * I wish there were less student in my logic class.
(32) I wish there were less tomfoolery in my logic class.
(33) I wish there were fewer students in my logic class.
⇒ Names are count nouns with a distinctive syntactic requirement.
(34) a. Michael is teaching Metaphysics this year;
    b. * The Michael is teaching Metaphysics this year;
        S
           DP                      VP
               Øᵗhe Michael          is teaching metaphysics this year
        c. * Ever-popular Michael is teaching Metaphysics this year
        d. The ever-popular Michael is teaching Metaphysics this year
            S
               DP                      VP
                   The NP               is teaching metaphysics this year
                                   ever-popular Michael
(35) a. * Ivan on the roof is howling.
    b. The Ivan on the roof is howling.
        S
           DP                      VP
               Øᵗhe Ivan (RC who is on the roof) is howling
        c. Ivan, who is on the roof, is howling.
        d. * The Ivan, who is on the roof, is howling.
            S
               DP                      VP
                   The NP               is howling
                                   Ivan (RC who is on the roof)
a. My neighbor is married to John Terry.

b. * My neighbor is married to the John Terry.

c. My neighbor is married to THE John Terry.

⇒ In English, the definite article must appear as null with a name (i.e., as unpronounced) when the name is its structural sister, unless the definite article is stressed.

⇒ Consequently, there are very few syntactic environments that distinguish names from common count nouns. The Romanov examples are a case in point as witnessed by the ambiguities in (7), ‘Joe Romanov (my barber) is not a Romanov’, and (22), ‘Hominid (my cat) is not a Hominid’, which each have true and false readings.

**Semantic:** The Being-called condition.
• Jeshion’s New Paper, “Referentialism and Predicativism about Names”
• Burge’s “metaphoric” examples were slyly introduced.
• The predicativist needs to justify exclusion of the BCC-unfriendly examples.

The predicativist has to explain why the BCC-unfriendly examples are not examples of names used literally.

And, “here’s the rub,” her criteria had better not count the BCC-friendly uses of names to themselves be non-literal uses of names.

An illustrative example:

(37) Les Paul only ever played Les Pauls.
I hadn’t intended this to be a family example, just a demonstration that words that are names can also occur as capitalized common nouns.
⇒ Another instance of deferred interpretation? Robin says, yes!

• Deferred interpretation as the referentialist’s answer to the million-dollar question

(38) There are two gorillas and three humans in the Primate Art Museum;
(39) I own two Stellas.

⇒ Jeshion’s Claim: On the deferred interpretation reading of the name, we have to first choose an individual referent of the name ‘Stella’ before getting the deferred interpretation reading.

‘Stella’ is a predicate with deferred interpretation as true of artworks made by Stella (a particular Stella, Frank Stella)

I say, true, but misleading, given how much more famous (and valuable!) Stellas by Frank Stella are.

(40) There were five Obamas at the Halloween party.
(Three Baracks and two Michelles.)
(41) I played all five Bachs.
(J.S., C.P.E., et cetera)
(42) I’ve only read two of the Brontës.
(Charlotte and Emily, but not Anne.)
• Questioning the Ungrammaticality Judgment of examples like (34b)

⇒ If names can be coerced to have deferred interpretations as common count-noun predicates, then they should always be able to have the syntax of common count nouns, pace Sloat (1969).

(43) a. * Dog is kind
    b. Smith is kind.
(44) a. The dog is kind
    b. * The Smith is kind.

Jeshion: But (44b) isn’t actually bad.

Maybe because it’s a last name? Compare:

(45) * The Jeff is bad.

A: I have appointments today with two Johnsons and a Smith.
B: Relax...you’ve got an easier day than you think. Apparently, the Smith already stopped by.

• Binding

(46) In every race, the colt won. (covarying and non covarying)
(47) In every race, John won. (no covarying reading)
(48) In every race, the John won. (only covarying reading)

(47′) In every race x, John won [x].

(48′) In every race x, the John [in x] won [x].
References

Fara, Delia Graff (MS), ‘Romanov’ Is Not Always a Name. (Never to be published) Manuscript (2014).