
Names Forum

Comments on Comments

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Abstract

Lena Peterson's comments (*Names* 37: 83–92) misinterpret my main point (in *Names* 33 [1985]: 111–18) on the connection between names and other noun phrases. A printing error in the 1985 article also caused confusion for many readers.

In the March 1989 issue of *Names*, my friend and colleague Lena Peterson makes some comments on the two articles by me and Vibeke Dalberg, respectively, on proper names in the special issue on name theory which appeared as the September 1985 issue of *Names*. On the whole, I think that most of the answers to Peterson's critical observations on my article can be found in the article itself, but her contribution calls for at least one comment.

As we all know, proper names are always definite noun phrases. I mentioned in passing (113) that this means that their definiteness must be marked somehow in the deep structure (as this marking is unique for the proper names, it is enough to trigger off a transformation into proper names later on), whereas the definiteness of all other nouns is derived from the structure of the text (in a wide meaning) in which they appear. Peterson has evidently not understood (or accepted) the main point of my article: that this means that proper names, being always definite noun phrases, should be compared, semantically and otherwise, to other definite noun phrases such as those that appear in contexts, not to indefinite noun phrases, for example appellatives, such as they appear independently of contexts in the lexicon. (This makes Peterson's Table 1 [87] quite pointless to me.) Of course, my deviant concept of the

semantics of proper names (and, but to a much lesser degree, of definite noun phrases) requires those unconventional uses of the terms “semantic feature” and “synonym” which Peterson criticizes so indignantly.

I take the liberty of seizing the opportunity to point out a serious error in the printed version of my article. I titled it “Ten Theses on Proper Names.” Since there are more paragraphs than theses in the article, the reader has every right to expect to find the paragraphs containing a new thesis numbered accordingly, and in the manuscript I sent to the journal the theses were also numbered neatly from one to ten. I wasn’t given any proofs to read, and it is easy to imagine my amazement when I found that in the printed version, for some inexplicable reason (I hope) all the numerals 1–10 had been deleted, thus reducing much of the readability of my work. The first five theses coincide with the first five paragraphs. The interested reader can insert the rest of the figures when I now give the number of the thesis, the page, and the first few words of the paragraph in question:

Thesis	Page	First Words of the Paragraph
6	114	“Some monoreferential NPs exist...”
7	115	“As opposed to place names...”
8	116	“The lexical competence...”
9	117	“But if there is...”
10	117	“We may be born...”

Thank you.

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Works Cited

- Dalberg, Vibeke. “On Homonymy between Proper Name and Appellative.” *Names* 33 (1985): 127–35.
- Pamp, Bengt. “Ten Theses on Proper Names.” *Names* 33 (1985): 111–18.
- Peterson, Lena. “Comments on Two Papers on the Semantics of Proper Names.” *Names* 37 (1989): 83–92.