

Plural Predication

THOMAS J. MCKAY

CLARENDON PRESS · OXFORD

Contents

Introduction	1
1. A Formal Language with Non-distributive Plurals:	
Preliminary Considerations	5
Non-distributive Predication	5
Distributive and non-distributive plurals: some basics	9
Conjoined predicates and argument-place distinctions	11
Non-distributive relations	13
Plurals in philosophy	17
2. Against Singularism	19
The multiple relations idea	19
Singularism	22
Singularist prejudice displayed	27
Mereology	33
Can one thing be many?	36
Composition relations	42
The plurally plural?	46
Martian perplurals	51
A linguistic argument for singularism	53
The peculiarity of singularism	54
3. Semantics	55
Metalinguistic resources	56
Terms	57
Quantifiers	58
The formal language	59
Semantics	60
Specific quantifiers	70
Existence entailments	71
Dual quantifiers	74

4. Natural Language Issues	78
Distributive correlates	78
‘at least’, ‘at most’, and ‘exactly’	79
Marking distributive predication	81
Distribution: A better approach	83
Intermediate distributions and collective objects?	88
Multiple quantification	92
Cumulative readings of multiple quantification	93
Relationship between singular and plural quantification	96
A problem with conjoined terms	97
5. Set Theoretic Semantics	103
Set theoretic representation of non-distributive predication	103
Quantifiers	107
Proportional quantifiers	110
The formal language and semantics	111
Relationship between singular and plural quantification	113
The set theoretic approach and the goal of semantics	114
6. <i>Among</i>	119
The elimination of singular variables	120
Axioms for “ <i>Among</i> Theory”	121
Theorems	124
Principles of sameness (\approx)	127
Adding other predicates	128
The identity schema	128
Comprehension	129
Consequences of comprehension	130
Terms	132
<i>One of</i>	135
Per plurals	137
Relationship to second-order logic	139
Criticisms of plurals	143
Williamson on everything, plurals and second-order logic	147
Relationship to set theory	154

Further relationship to set theory	156
Is <i>among</i> a logical constant?	160
7. <i>THE</i> : The Basic Logic	162
Plural 'the'	162
'All of the A'	166
Improper plural descriptions	167
Peculiar definite descriptions	170
The singular definite description	171
Comparison with mass quantifiers	173
Plural <i>de re</i>	177
Relationship to Scha's discussion of definite descriptions	181
8. <i>THE</i> : Context Sensitivity	185
Predicate supplementation and domain restriction	186
Problem 1: lack of unique specification	187
Problem 2: multiple domains	189
Problem 1 reconsidered	194
"Psychologism"	196
Definite descriptions as existentials	198
A problem for another proposal	203
Events	203
A problem for the maximality account	204
9. Pronouns	207
Uses for pronouns	208
Pronouns as bound variables	209
Referential pronouns	212
E-type pronouns	213
Donkey sentences	216
Relative reference	218
Caveats	222
A continuum of linguistic information	231
Categories of pronouns again	233
10. Plurals and Events	240
Distributive ambiguity and events	241
Events and Paradox	245

Unscoped quantification again	246
Schein's complex examples	247
Landman's objection to the multiple role approach	250
<i>All</i>	252
<i>Bibliography</i>	256
<i>Index</i>	261