Predicates of Personal Taste

Dirk Kindermann
dirk.kindermann@gmail.com
9 April 2013

1 Some Initial Data Motivating the Debate about Context-sensitivity

1. (Faultless) Disagreement (Kölbel, 2004; Lasersohn, 2005, 2008; Stephenson, 2007a; Wright, 2001, 2006)

   (1) John: This chili is tasty.
        Mary: No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, this chili is not tasty.

   (2) John: Roller coasters are fun.
        Mary: No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, roller coasters are not fun.

2. Retraction (MacFarlane, 2012)[1]

   (3) a. John: Fish sticks are not tasty.
        b. Mary: But you said years ago that fish sticks were tasty.
        c. John: I take that back/I was wrong. Fish sticks aren't tasty.
        d.   # They were tasty then, but they aren't tasty any more.
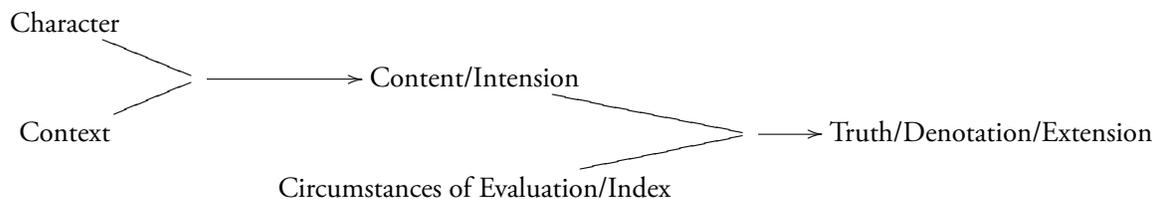   e.   # When I said that, I only meant that they were tasty to me then.

3. Eavesdropping (Egan, 2010)

   (4) John: Rollers coasters are fun.
        Eavesdropper Lucy (to herself): That's false/No. Roller coasters are not fun.

2 Lasersohn (2005)

2.1 Kaplan (1989)

- 3x 'meaning': Character, Content (intension), truth/denotation (extension)

- Interpretation function: $[\![\ \text{-} \ ]\!]^{c,i}$
- Content at c: $\lambda i. \ [\![\ \text{--} \ ]\!]^{c,i}$
- Character: $\lambda c. \ [\lambda i. \ [\![\ \text{--} \ ]\!]^{c,i}]$

---

[1]Note, however, that Stephenson (2007a, 516) – proposing a relativist semantics/pragmatics – rejects retraction data.

- Truth in context: Φ is true in c iff $[\lambda i.\ \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,i}]\,(i_c) = 1$

$$\text{iff } \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,i_c} = 1$$

2.2 A quick argument against indexicality & egocentric contextualism: faultless disagreement

(1)   John: This chili is tasty.
            Mary: No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, this chili is not tasty.

(5)   John: This chili is tasty to me.
            Mary: # No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, this chili is not tasty to me.

(6)   John: I'm a doctor.
            Mary: # No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, I'm not a doctor.

- Contrast (1) with (5) and (6):

  (1): disagreement/contradiction & faultlessness

  (5) and (6): Faultlessness, but no disagreement/contradiction.

- CONTRADICTION: Two sentence-context pairs (or utterances) are contradictory iff the contents they express in their respective contexts are contradictory. Two contents (sets of possibilities) are contradictory iff their intersection is empty (there is no possibility at which they are both true).   (cf. 667)

- But according to egocentric contextualism, the assertions in (1) express the same contents as the assertions in (5), respectively.

2.3 Another place for context-dependence: Lasersohn's view

- Basic idea: PPTs express the same content in all contexts, but the truth value of sentences in which they occur may vary with individuals/judges (not just worlds, times, . . .)
The interesting context-sensitivity (relativisation to individuals) is not indexicality (derivation of content from context) but is in the evaluation of content relative to the circumstance of evaluation/index.

- **Faultless disagreement**: Disagreement as contradiction (as above), faultlessness as truth relative to speaker/thinker as judge

- Interpretation function: $\llbracket\ \text{-}\ \rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$

- Content at c: $\lambda\langle w,t,j\rangle.\ \llbracket\ \text{--}\ \rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$

- Content of a sentence Φ at c: $\lambda\langle w,t,j\rangle.\ \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$

$$= \{\langle w,t,j\rangle: \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = 1\} \text{ (set of world-time-individual triples)}$$

- Truth in L-context: Φ is true in c iff $[\lambda\langle w,t,j\rangle.\ \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}]\,(w_c,t_c,j_c) = 1$

$$\text{iff } \llbracket \Phi \rrbracket^{c,\langle w_c,t_c,j_c\rangle} = 1 \tag{666}$$

- Note on **L-context** (Lasersohn's notion of context): Occasions of utterance do not determine L-contexts. L-contexts are formal objects that model a concrete situation of utterance plus a judge (who need not be present in the speech situation). A concrete situation of utterance determines as many different L-contexts as there are

individuals – one for each potential judge. "...the objective facts of the situation of utterance do not uniquely determine a judge." [2] (669)

- $[\![\text{hungry}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\ x$ is hungry in w at t (relative to j)

  $[\![\text{fun}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\ x$ is fun for j in w at t

  $[\![\text{tasty}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\ x$ tastes good to j in w at t

  $[\![\text{John}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \text{John}$

  $[\![\text{I}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = $ the speaker/agent of c

- $[\![\text{I am hungry}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![\text{hungry}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} ([\![\text{I}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}) = [\![\text{hungry}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ (the agent of c) = $[\lambda x.\ x$ is hungry in w at $t]$ (the agent of c) = 1 iff the agent of c is hungry in w at t

- $[\![\text{The chill is tasty}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![\text{tasty}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} ([\![\text{the chill}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}) = [\lambda x_e.\ x$ tastes good to j in w at $t]$ (the chill) = 1 iff the chili tastes good to j in w at t

- $[\![P \text{ for } \alpha]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![P]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,\alpha\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\ [x$ is P for α in w at $t]$

  $[\![\text{The ride is fun for John}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![\text{fun for John}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} ([\![\text{the ride}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}) = [\![\text{fun}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,John\rangle} ([\![\text{the ride}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ = $[\lambda x_e.\ x$ is fun for John in w at $t]$ (the ride) = 1 iff the ride is fun for John in w at t

- Pragmatics: How is the judge j determined?

  - Not by the situation of utterance – Lasersohn wants to allow for the same utterance (sentence-context of utterance pair) to be true relative to one individual/judge and false relative to another.
  - j is determined by the judge/assessor/evaluating individual – assessment for truth from the assessor's perspective:

    (i) Autocentric perspective: assessor takes herself as j

    (ii) Exocentric perspective: assessor adopts someone else's perspective = takes s.o. else as j (Lasersohn: free indirect discourse, ascriptions of *fun* to particular events, questions – more on this below)

    (iii) Acentric perspective: assessor doesn't adopt a perspective – "bird's eye view" – no truth-value
  - **Assertion**: Typical perspective for appropriateness of assertions: autocentric (typically: Φ is appropriately assertable only if Φ is true in the L-context who's judge is the speaker of the L-context.)
  - What could Lasersohn say about retraction and eavesdropping?

    ✓ **Eavesdropping**: Eavesdroppers are free to chose a L-context with themselves as judge (assuming a 'transparent' truth predicate, Lucy in (4) can appropriately say 'That's false').

    ↯ **Retraction**: John in (3c) has no reason to take back what he said years ago. Note that evaluators are free to chose the L-context with any judge, *but the time must be the time of the evaluated utterance.*[3] So if fish sticks were tasty to John at the time of the utterance years ago, that utterance is still true relative to John's context in (3c), even though his taste has changed. That's because the taste that matters for evaluation is the judge's (John's) taste *at the time of the L-context*: years ago.[4]

---

[2] MacFarlane (2012), also a relativist about PPTs, distinguishes between a *context of utterance* c_U and a *context of assertion* c_A, which allows for a more transparent separation of the judge (or for MacFarlane: standard of taste) from the 'context' (of utterance). The resulting notion of truth is as follows:

Truth in a context of utterance c_U and relative to a context of assessment c_A: A sentence Φ is true at c_U and c_A iff $[\![\Phi]\!]^{c_U,w_{c_U},t_{c_U},j_{c_A}} = \text{1}$.

[3] In Kaplan's system, tense expressions are operators on the time-parameter of the index. A sentence like 'I'm sitting' expresses the 'time-neutral', 'temporalist' content $\{\langle w,t,j\rangle$: the speaker is sitting in w at $t\}$. So evaluators should judge a past utterance of 'I'm sitting' relative to the time of utterance.

[4] MacFarlane (2012) argues on this basis that relativizing to standards of taste, which can be determined by the assessor's intentions independently of the time-parameter, are to be preferred.

3 What are Predicates of Personal Taste?

- In short: no one has a definition. Everyone uses paradigm cases *tasty* and *fun*.

- On taste — what PPTs are not:
  Predicates of personal taste (whether sth. is to s.o.'s taste) $\neq$ taste/flavor predicates (how things taste): *sweet, sour, salty, bitter, savoury, creamy, …*
  Predicates of personal taste $\neq$ predicates of quality: *harmonious, balanced, …*   (Barry Smith)

- What expressions is the analysis supposed to apply to (whether or not they're PPTs)?

  – Lasersohn (2005, 682): "In principle, the analysis should apply in any case where, if one speaker asserts a sentence Φ and another speaker asserts $\neg\Phi$, we have an intuition of contradiction or direct disagreement, but where no objective facts can decide the issue, even in principle."
  – Pearson (2012, 3): " In principle, we think that the account proposed is at least applicable to other predicates that (i) can take an overt Experiencer argument as in tasty to Mary or fun for John; (ii) can occur without such an overt argument as in (3) and (iii) express statements whose truth is a matter of opinion when they occur without an overt Experiencer argument."
  – Cappelen & Hawthorne (2009) include *spicy, funny, delicious, disgusting, nauseating, filling*
  – Richard (2008, 10): *sexy, hip, L7, boring perverted, …*, and even standard gradable adjectives like *rich* and *tall*
  – Moltmann (2010) includes *delicious, pleasant, nice* and 'possibly' moral predicates, aesthetic predicates, and gradable adjectives like *tall* and *rich*.
  – Egan (2010)'s key examples include *good, beautiful, elegant, ugly, disgusting* (no semantics is endorsed)

- *PPT* – a family resemblance concept? A list of (defeasible) features:[5]

  1. Possibility of faultless disagreement, 'matter of opinion,' (but: *easy, difficult*, epithets (*idiot*), nouns (*pleasure, bore*), verbs (*suck, rock*), epistemic modals, probability statements, knowledge ascriptions, generic *one*/PRO_{arb}, …)

  2. Experiencer-argument 1: Complement licensing – PP (*for/to*)

     (7) The ship was sunk by the pirates.
     (8) * The ship sank by the pirates.

     (9) Licorice is tasty to John.
     (10) The Giant Dipper is fun for Mary.
     (11) * The Giant Dipper is wooden for Mary.

  3. Experiencer-argument 2: Adjunct interposition

     (12) The student of history with the nose ring failed.
     (13) *The student with the nose ring of history failed.

     (14) Roller coasters are fun for me when dizzy.
     (15) *Roller coasters are fun when dizzy for me.

  4. Experiencer-argument 3: Control

     (16) a. The ship was sunk to collect the insurance.
           b. The ship was sunk [by x] [PRO_x] to collect the insurance money.

---

[5]Cf. Anthony (2012) & Schaffer (2011), inter alia

(17) * The ship sank to collect the insurance.

(18) a. The Giant Dipper is fun to ride.
 b. The Giant Dipper is fun [for x] [PRO$_x$] to ride.

(19) * The Giant Dipper is wooden to ride.

But:

(20) * The coffee is tasty/delicious/disgusting to drink.

5. Experiencer-argument 4: Binding

(21) Every boy called his mother.

(22) Every girl went to a local playground.

(23) Everyone got something tasty.   (but see Lasersohn (2008); MacFarlane (2012))

6. Gerund subjects

(24) Riding the Giant Dipper is fun.

But:

(25) * Eating this chili is tasty/delicious/disgusting.

7. Impersonal constructions

(26) It is fun to ride the Giant Dipper.

But:

(27) It is tasty/delicious/disgusting to eat this chili.

8. Interaction of perspective with scalarity (Lasersohn, 2008, §1.2): – see section 6

9. Derivation from object-experiencer psychological verbs (Anthony, 2012; Schaffer, 2011)
Obj.-experiencer psychological verbs: *frighten, delight, bore, please, frustrate, amuse, …* [6]
frightening, delighting, boring, pleasing, frustrating, amusing, …
(*tasty, fun* ?? Schaffer (2011, §2): "'tasty' comes from the verb 'to taste,' which comes from the Latin 'taxtare,' meaning *to evaluate*. 'Fun' comes from the Middle English 'to fon,' meaning *to befool*.)

4   Stephenson (2007a)

- Modification of Lasersohn 1: PPTs are 2-place predicates with an experiencer argument. (In favour of a syntactically realised experiencer argument: complement licensing, [7])

  $[\![\text{tasty}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![\text{taste good}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\lambda y_e. [y \text{ tastes good to } x \text{ in } w \text{ at } t]$

  $[\![\text{fun}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e.\lambda y_e. [y \text{ is fun for } x \text{ in } w \text{ at } t]$

- Modification 2: Judge-dependency is not lexically encoded in PPTs but due to a covert nominal item PRO$_J$.

  $[\![\text{PRO}_J]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = j$

- $[\![\text{for}]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x_e. x$

---

[6]Subject-experiencer psychological verbs: *adore, fear, love, hate, enjoy*

[7]Against Lasersohn's treatment of *for* as an intensional operator: operators can be iterated, operators aren't restricted as to which sentences they can apply to (Schaffer, 2011, §2.2).

- (28) a. This cake is tasty.

  b. [This cake] [is tasty PRO$_J$]

  c. $\llbracket\text{(b)}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \llbracket\text{tasty}\rrbracket^{c;\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ $(\llbracket\text{PRO}_J\rrbracket^{c\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ $(\llbracket\text{this cake}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ = 1 iff the (contextually salient) cake tastes good to j in w at t

- Modification 3: Attitude verbs 'bind' judge parameter (when PRO$_J$ is in the LF).

  $\llbracket\text{think}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda p_{\langle s,\langle i,et\rangle\rangle}.$ $[\lambda z_e.\ \forall\langle w',t',x\rangle$ s.t. it is compatible with what z believes in w at t that (s)he is x in w' at t': $p(w')(t')(x) = 1]$

  (29) a. [Mary [thinks [[this cake] [is tasty PRO$_J$]]]]

  b. $\llbracket\text{(a)}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \llbracket\text{thinks}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ $([\lambda w''.[\lambda t''.[\lambda j''.\ \llbracket\text{this cake is tasty PRO}_J\rrbracket^{c,\langle w'',t'',j''\rangle}]]])$ $(\llbracket\text{Mary}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ = 1 iff $\forall\langle w',t',x\rangle$ s.t. it is compatible with what Mary believes in w at t that (s)he is x in w' at t': the (contextually salient) cake tastes good to x in w' at t'

- Modification 4: covert pronoun pro$_x$ accounts for exocentric readings.

  $\llbracket\text{pro}_x\rrbracket^{c\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ = the individual(s) salient in c

  (30) a. [This cake] [is tasty pro$_{John}$]

  b. $\llbracket\text{(a)}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \llbracket\text{tasty}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ $(\llbracket\text{pro}_{John}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ $(\llbracket\text{this cake}\rrbracket^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$ = 1 iff the cake tastes good to John in w at t

- Judge-dependence: PRO$_J$ as experiencer argument

  No judge-dependence: pro$_x$ or explicit PP (e.g., *for John*) as experiencer argument

- Pragmatics:

  Autocentric belief-norm of assertion: "In order for A to assert that S, A only needs to believe that S is true as judged by A." (Stephenson, 2007a, 509)

  Modification 5: Common ground of the conversation: set of contents = set of $\langle w,t,j\rangle$-triples. The content p of a judge-dependent taste claim is added to the common ground only if for all conversational participants x in c, $\langle w_c, t_c, x\rangle \in p$.

  ✓ What Stephenson could say about **eavesdropping**: ✓ Eavesdropper E is free to assess the expressed content relative to herself: $\langle w_c, t_c, E\rangle$.

  ♮ **Retraction**: Stephenson (2007a, 516) rejects retractability of bare taste claims as "odd and pathologically meek." She would run into the same difficulties as Lasersohn if she wanted to predict retractability (see above).

5 Alternatives

Label	Contextualism					Expressivism	Objectivism
	Flexible con-textualism	Genericity					
Lasersohn's Option #	2	3b		3a	5a/b	4	3c
View	Experiencer argument can get any contextually salient value in the expressed content	Exp. arg.: gen. quantified		Experiencer argument is existentially quantified	Disagreement due to meta-linguistic/ meta-contextual conflict	Bare taste asser-tions are non-truth evaluable & express the speaker's attitude	Unrelativized 1-place pre-dicates, expressing objective properties
Proponents	Cappelen & Hawthorne (2009); Glanzberg (2007); Schaffer (2011)	Pearson (2012, 2013)	Moltmann (2010)	? (Semantic minimal-ists?)	≈ Barker (2002, 2012); Sundell (2010)	– / cf. (Gibbard, 1990, 2003; Schroeder, 2008; Yal-cin, 2007, 2011)	? (crude epistemi-cists?)

5.1 Contextualism

Flexible contextualism (Cappelen & Hawthorne, 2009; Glanzberg, 2007; Schaffer, 2011) ≈ Option 2:

- Problem (Lasersohn):

(31) Mary: This is not fun.
John: Oh, yes it is!

- Schaffer's (2011) divide-and-conquer strategy: depending on QUD / continuation of dialogue (*entrench, retract, debate*), contextualism predicts our intuitions: (i) misunderstanding and correction, (ii) faulty disagreement, (iii) disagreement with epistemic faultlessness, disagreement at the level of conversational implicatures, …

- Disagreement at the level of attitudes (Huvenes, 2012)

5.2 Genericity: Pearson (2012), Moltmann (2010)

Pearson (2012)

- 'PPTs such as tasty are used to make statements about whether something is tasty to people in general, based on first person experience.' (19)
- PPTs are two-place predicates: *tasty* has the lexically encoded presupposition that the experiencer has direct perceptual experience with the object.

$\llbracket \mathsf{tasty} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \lambda x \lambda y : x$ has direct perceptual experience of the relevant kind of y in w. y is tasty to x in w

- The experiencer argument, when covert, is bound by the generic quantifier GEN. The presence of GEN is supposed to follow from the fact that PPTs are individual-level predicates (ILPs, §3.4) and the assumption that ILPs are inherently generic (Chierchia, 1995).

- First-person-orientation is achieved by adding an *identify with* relation to the restrictor of GEN: *I (x,y)*. 'To say that the cake is tasty is to say that the cake is tasty to every (contextually restricted) individual with whom I identify. The *identify with* relation is intended to model a notion of empathy and is therefore reflexive: I always empathize with myself.'　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(21)

- 1st attempt:

  (65) a. This cake is tasty.
       b. [This cake$_i$ [GEN [t_i is tasty $\lambda x.$ I(speaker, x)]]] c. $[\![(65b)]\!]^{c,w} = \forall x, w'$ [Acc(w, w') & C_3(this-cake, x, w') & I(speaker, x)] [tasty(this-cake, x, w')]
       where Acc(w, w') is an accessibility relation, C_3(this-cake, x, w') a contextual restriction to the effect that w' is inhabited by this cake and x and this cake and x are relevant in w'.

  (65c) says that for all accessible worlds w' and all individuals x such that (i) w' is inhabited by this cake and x, (ii) this cake and x are relevant in w' and (iii) the speaker identifies with x, this cake is tasty to x in w'.

- How to get the speaker to be the individual doing the identifying: adding an abstraction operator Op in the left periphery of the clause that binds the variable in the experiencer-argument position – even in unembedded clauses:

  (73) $[_{CP\ <s,<e,t>}\ \text{Op}_2\ \text{Op}_1\ [_{IP\ <t>}\ \ldots(\text{pro}_1)\ldots w_2\ldots]]$

  ⇒ Sentence contents are set of CW.

- 2nd attempt:

  (74) a. This cake is tasty.
       b. LF: $[_{CP}\ \text{Op}_1\ [_{IP}\ \text{This cake}_i\ [\text{GEN}\ [t_i\ \text{is tasty}\ \lambda x.\ I(y_1, x)]]]]$
       c. $[\![(74b)]\!]^c\ \lambda w \lambda y.\ \forall x, w'$ [Acc(w, w') & C_3(this-cake, x, w') & $I(y, x)$] [tasty(this-cake, x, w')]

  (74c) describes the property of being a y such that for all accessible worlds w and all x such that this cake and x are relevant in w and y identifies with x, this cake is tasty to x in w.

- Pragmatics:

  Assertion: A sentence Φ is assertable by S in c only if the property expressed by Φ in c is true of S (the proposition resulting from the application to S is true).

  Sentence contents are set of CW. Yet the common ground is a set of propositions (sets of possible worlds)/their intersection. A successful assertion of Φ updates the CG by eliminating those possible worlds where the proposition obtained by applying the property expressed by Φ to the speaker is false.[8]

  The effect of update of a common ground with the content of Φ uttered by an individual S is to eliminate worlds in which the proposition obtained by applying the property expressed by Φ to S is false.

- Faultless disagreement: If the speakers select *identify with* relations to the effect that the set of individuals ranged over by GEN is the same (if they overlap), there is genuine disagreement (contradiction at the level of sentence contents & propositions expressed).

---

[8] In which sense do sentences 'express' CW contents, i.e. what is the role of CW content in communication? Is it 'what is said' (cf. same-saying reports in Pearson's example (76), (78))?

Sense of faultlessness evaporates in cases where the speaker fails to recognise that her tastes are exceptional (so hardly anyone she identifies with shares her tastes) (*Soapy dishwater is tasty*).

Sense of faultlessness remains as long as the assumption of commonality – that speaker and hearers are alike in their tastes – is reasonable/held up by pretence.[9]

- Exocentric uses:

Reflexivity of the *identify with* relation can be defeated: where the speaker's tastes are irrelevant, the **contextual restriction** C_3 can exclude the speaker from the set GEN ranges over (there is no accessible world in which the speaker is relevant).

Where exocentric readings are available, no entailments about the agent's tastes are carried. This may be so only if (i) the agent has not tasted the food or (ii) there is something about the agent that makes her an unsuitable candidate for being an individual to whom the food is tasty.[10]   (38)

An alleged advantage over Stephenson's *pro$_x$*-analysis:

(85) a. John: Snowball hasn't touched her cat food. It must not be tasty.
      b. Mary: *(Observes a stray cat come into the kitchen and tuck in to the food.)*
            No, the cat food must be tasty, look at the way this cat is enjoying it. Snowball's just picky.

The referent of *pro$_x$* can't include the stray cat, of which John and Mary only become aware after John's utterance. But Mary isn't denying that the food isn't tasty to Snowball ('Snowball's just picky'). So no disagreement for Stephenson.

Pearson, in contrast, predicts a reading of (85a) on which the cat food must not be tasty to cats in general.

- Lasersohn (2005, 654) against genericity:

(32) This is fun, but most people would hate it.

(33) This is tasty, although people find it disgusting.

(32) and (33) should be infelicitous on Pearson's view (without an *ad hoc* super strict contextual restriction to almost no one).

Moltmann (2010)

- Sentences involving PPTs have absolute truth conditions: 'attitudinal objects' (John's belief that S, the belief that S); assertions express attitudinal objects (the speaker's assertion of being a hero)
- First-person-based genericity (cf. generic *one*/PRO$_{arb}$)

Gn: quantification over those (contextually relevant & normal possible) individuals that the speaker identifies with – to which she applies the predicate as if to herself

(34) One can see the picture from the entrance. $\Rightarrow$I can see the picture from the entrance.

---

[9]*Pace* Pearson (2012, 36), it is not the case that both speakers speak truly (and disagree) when their assumption of commonality is justified/pretended to hold yet false. In this case, it's either true that something is tasty to the people they identify with or it is false.

[10]Does this prediction yield an exocentric reading in the following example by Lasersohn (2005, 672), assuming that John went on the rides with his son Bill?

(39) Mary: How did Bill like the rides?
      John: Well, the merry-go-round was fun, but the water slide was a little too scary.

(35) It is possible PRO$_{arb}$ to see the picture from the entrance.

(36) a. One sometimes thinks one's life is too short.
   b. Gn x x sometimes thinks x's life is too short.

Generic simulation: generalising one's own situation (judged as normal in relevant respects)

- Analysis:

(37) a. Chocolate is tasty.
   b. $\lambda x.$ [Gn y tasty(chocolate, qua(y, $\lambda z.[I\ z\ x]$))]

(37a) expresses the property of being a x such that for any contextually relevant y, chocolate is tasty to y qua being identified with by z.

qua object: Gn ranges over individuals *as having a certain property* – e.g. being identified with by z: the individual x qua being someone z identifies with.

- Essentially first-personal cognitive access to the content $\Rightarrow$ faultlessness

6   A Note on Gradability & Faultless Disagreement

- PPTs occur in standard degree constructions:

  Equative: *as tasty as*; comparative: *tastier than, more fun than*; comparative of inferiority: *less tasty than*; excessive: *too tasty to waste*; satisfactive: *tasty enough to serve our guests*; demonstrative: *It wasn't that fun*; elative: *so fun, very tasty*; superlative: *tastiest, most fun*;[11]

- All gradable adjectives allow for faultless disagreement:

(38) Didi: Mary is rich (for a New Yorker).
      Naomi: No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, Mary is not rich (for a New Yorker).

Barker (2002, 2012); Richard (2004, 2008): The disagreement concerns the cut-off point – Didi & Naomi can agree about the facts – what Mary owns/how much money she makes a year/has in the bank – and about the comparison class; they agree where to put her on the richness scale. They disagree about the standards for richness — about whether to assign the cut-off point for richness above or below Mary's degree of richness

- Faultless disagreement regarding matters of personal taste is not (always) disagreement regarding the cut-off point (Lasersohn, 2008, §1.2):

  > What seems crucial for disagreements over taste is not the location of the cut-off point, but the assignment of degrees. Different people may assign markedly different degrees of fun or tastiness to the same items, and may differ radically in the relative order of these items on the fun or tastiness scale; but no objective 'matter of fact' would seem to select any one of these assignments or orderings as the correct one. (Lasersohn, 2008, 308)

- Contrast with *rich, tall, open, …*
- Faultless disagreement regarding comparatives, comparatives of inferiority, equatives:

(39) John: Your chili is tastier than mine.
      Mary: No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, *your* chili is tastier than *mine*!

---

[11] Measure phrases are odd when combined with just the adjective (cf. *6 ft.* *tall*): *? fun*. PPTs do allow for measure phrases as differential clauses in comparative constructions: *10 times* *more fun than*.

(40)　John:　Tim Duncan is taller than Dirk Nowitzki.
　　　　Mary:　No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, Nowitzki is taller than Duncan.

(39) seems faultless – there is no objective fact as to the chilis' degrees of tastiness – but (40) is not: It is a fact that Nowitzki is 1 inch taller than Duncan (Nowitzki is 7 ft. 0 in). Note that the cut-off point is irrelevant here. John and Mary could continue (39) by agreeing either that none of the chilis is tasty or that both of them are tasty.

(41)　John:　Grading papers is less fun than giving lectures.
　　　　Mary:　No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, giving lectures is less fun than grading papers.

(42)　John:　The Giant Dipper is as fun every other roller coaster we've been on.
　　　　Mary:　No/Nuh-uh/I disagree, the Giant Dipper isn't as fun as the other roller coasters.

References

Anthony, A. (2012). A 'fun' ambiguity. Handout of talk at New York Philosophy of Language Colloquium.

Barker, C. (2002). The dynamics of vagueness. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, *25*, 1–36.

Barker, C. (2012). Negotiating taste. Unpublished Ms.

Cappelen, H. & Hawthorne, J. (2009). *Relativism and Monadic Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chierchia, G. (1995). Individual-level predicates as inherent generics. In G. N. Carlson & F. J. Pelletier (Eds.), *The Generic Book* (pp. 176–223). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Egan, A. (2010). Disputing about taste. In R. Feldman & T. A. Warfield (Eds.), *Disagreement* (pp. 247–86). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibbard, A. (1990). *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings. A Theory of Normative Judgment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibbard, A. (2003). *Thinking How To Live*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glanzberg, M. (2007). Context, content, and relativism. *Philosophical Perspectives*, *136*, 1–29.

Huvenes, T. T. (2012). Varieties of disagreement and predicates of taste. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *90*(1), 167–81.

Kaplan, D. (1989). Demonstratives. In J. Almog, J. Perry, & H. Wettstein (Eds.), *Themes from Kaplan* (pp. 481–563). New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kölbel, M. (2004). Faultless disagreement. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *104*(1), 53–73.

Lasersohn, P. (2005). Context dependence, disagreement, and predicates of personal taste. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, *28*, 643–86.

Lasersohn, P. (2008). Quantification and perspective in relativist semantics. *Philosophical Perspectives*, *22*(1), 305–337.

Lasersohn, P. (2009). Relative truth, speaker commitment, and control of implicit arguments. *Synthese*, *166*, 359–374.

MacFarlane, J. (2012). Assessment sensitivity. Relative truth and its applications. Unpublished Book Ms. (Draft of 1 November 2012). Available at www.johnmacfarlane.net (accessed April 2013).

Moltmann, F. (2010). Relative truth and the first person. *Philosophical Studies*, *150*(2), 187–220.

Pearson, H. (2012). A judge-free semantics for predicates of personal taste. *Journal of Semantics*.

Pearson, H. (2013). *The Sense of Self. Topics in the Semantics of De Se Expressions*. PhD thesis, Harvard.

Richard, M. (2004). Contextualism and relativism. *Philosophical Studies*, *119*(1), 215–42.

Richard, M. (2008). *When Truth Gives Out*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schaffer, J. (2011). Perspective in taste predicates and epistemic modals. In B. Weatherson & A. Egan (Eds.), *Epistemic Modals* (pp. 179–226). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schroeder, M. (2008). *Being For*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stephenson, T. (2007a). Judge dependence, epistemic modals, and predicates of personal taste. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, *30*(4), 487–525.

Stephenson, T. (2007b). *Toward a Theory of Subjective Meaning*. PhD thesis, MIT.

Sundell, T. (2010). Disagreements about taste. *Philosophical Studies*, 1–22. 10.1007/s11098-010-9572-6.

Wright, C. (2001). On being in a quandary. relativism, vagueness, logical revisionism. *Mind*, *110*(437), 45–98.

Wright, C. (2006). Intuitionism, realism, relativism and rhubarb. In P. Greenough & M. P. Lynch (Eds.), *Truth and Realism* (pp. 38–60). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yalcin, S. (2007). Epistemic modals. *Mind*, *116*, 983–1026.

Yalcin, S. (2011). Nonfactualism about epistemic modals. In A. Egan & B. Weatherson (Eds.), *Epistemic Modality* (pp. 295–332). Oxford: Oxford University Press.