# Theoretical landscape

## An opinionated guide to predicates of personal taste

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# Judge relativism

# Judge parameter: Lasersohn (2005)

- PPTs express the same content
- Truth depends on the circumstances of evaluation and varies with individuals
- Indices are minimally triples (cf. also Anand and Nevins (2004); Anand (2006) on individual coordinates of the index for indexical shift)

(1) Judge-enriched index (centered world)
$\mathrm{i} = \langle w, t, \mathrm{j} \ldots \rangle$

- The PPT–OP distinction is **semantic**

(2) $[\![ \text{ deciduous } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda x.\ x$ is deciduous in $w$ at $t$

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

# Stephenson (2007)

Central idea: modification and extension of (Lasersohn 2005) to unify PPTs and epistemics

# The mechanics

Key components

- The judge is a parameter of evaluation, as per Lasersohn (2005)
- PPTs are diadic: the taster is an argument (cf. Bylinina 2017)
- The taster can be a special pronoun $\text{PRO}_j$ or a null referential pronoun
- Judge-dependence of PPTs arises only with $\text{PRO}_j$

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

# Bare PPTs

Autocentric perspective: the taster is the judge, typically the speaker

(5) a. $[\![ \text{PRO}_j ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = j$

b. $[\![ [\text{This puerh}] [\text{is tasty PRO}_j] ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$
$= [\![ \text{tasty} ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} ([\![ \text{PRO}_j ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}) ([\![ \text{this puerh} ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle})$
$=1$ iff this puerh tastes good to $j$ in $w$ at $t$

# Bare PPTs, cont'd

- PPTs allow non-autocentric perspective

(6) Rotting flesh is delicious (to a vulture).
(adapted from Egan et al. 2005)

- The availability of such readings is determined by pragmatics
- In Stephenson's (2007) system, they arise when the taster is a pronominal *pro*

(7) a. $[\![ pro_x ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ = salient individual in $c$

b. $[\![$ [This puerh] [is tasty $pro_{Pranav}$] $]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$
$=[\![$ tasty $]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ ($[\![ pro_{Pr} ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$) ($[\![$ this puerh $]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$)
=1 iff this puerh tastes good to Pranav in $w$ at $t$

# Overt tasters

- PPTs can take overt experiencer arguments

(8) a. delicious for me

b. beautiful to Jane

- Often used as evidence for a diadic treatment across the board

(9) a. $[\![ \text{ for } ]\!]^{c,\langle j,w,t\rangle} = [\lambda y_e.y]$

b. $[\![ \text{ [This puerh] [is tasty for Pranav] } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$
$=[\![ \text{ tasty } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$ ($[\![ \text{ for Pranav } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$) ($[\![ \text{ this puerh } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$)
=1 iff this puerh tastes good to Pranav in $w$ at $t$

# Attitude reports

- The taster in embedded cases is the attitude subject

(10) Pranav thinks that this puerh is delicious.

- This property: another argument against indexical contextualism

# Attitude reports, cont'd

- Attitude verbs quantify over centered worlds (cf. Lewis 1979)

(11) a. $\text{Dox}_{w,t,x} = \{\langle w', t', y\rangle$ : is compatible with what $x$ believes in $w$ at $t$ that they are $y$ in $w'$ at $t'\}$

b. $[\![ \text{ think } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda p.\lambda z.\forall\langle w', t', y\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{w,t,x}$ : $p(w')(t')(x)$

- Judges are updated with the index

(12) a. [ Pranav [ thinks [ [this puerh ] [ is delicious $\text{PRO}_j$ ] ] ] ]

b. $[\![ \text{(12a)} ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = [\![ \text{ thinks } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$
$\lambda w''.\lambda t''.\lambda j''.[\![ \text{ this puerh is delicious PRO}_j ]\!]^{c,\langle w'',t'',j''\rangle})$
$[\![ \text{ Pranav } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle}$
$= 1$ iff $\forall\langle w', t', x\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{w,t,Pranav}$: the puerh is delicious to $x$ in $w'$ at $t'$

# Attitude reports, cont'd

- No need for judges to explain the shift in attitudes
- Worlds will shift due to intensional quantification
- Worlds and judges have to be bundled together due to the behavior of adjectives and independent constraints on worlds (Anand and Korotkova 2017)

# A note on epistemics

(13) *Context: Everyone present acknowledges that Joe might be in Berkeley, and so no one thinks there are going to be grounds to assert that he is in Boston. The point of conversation is to settle whether he might be in Boston. So, in the following dialogue:*

A. Joe **might** be in Boston.

B. That's wrong.

(i) $=$ 'It is not the case that Joe might be in Boston'. **disagreement about $\Diamond p$**

(ii) $\neq$ 'It is not the case that Joe is in Boston'. **disagreement about $p$**

(adapted from MacFarlane 2011: 148)

# A note on epistemics, cont'd

- Epistemics as another type of judge-dependent expressions (Stephenson 2007)

(14) a. $\textsc{Epist}_{w,t,x} = \{\langle w', t', y\rangle$ : is compatible with what $x$ knows in $w$ at $t$ that they are $y$ in $w'$ at $t'\}$

b. $[\![ \text{ might } ]\!]^{c,\langle w,t,j\rangle} = \lambda p.\exists\langle w', t', x\rangle \in \textsc{Epist}_{w,t,j}$ : $p(w')(t')(x)$

- Key difference between PPTs and epistemics: epistemics never take overt arguments or null pronouns

# Assessment relativism

# MacFarlane (2014)

Key components

- Instead of judges, there are standards of taste
  - The truth varies not with individuals, but with standards of taste
  - A desirable effect (not mentioned explicitly by MacFarlane 2014): normativity of PPT statements
- Propositions are evaluated not only with respect to the context of utterance (when things were said) but also with respect to the context of assessment

# Contexts of assessment

- Regular conversation
  - A proposition is assessed at the same spatio-temporal point that the sentence is uttered
  - No need to differentiate between the two: a context of utterance is enough
- Special cases
  - A proposition is evaluated for truth at a different point
  - Context of utterance is not enough

# Eavesdropping

- Known since Hacking (1967): epistemics track a group's knowledge (≈ *given what we know*)
- The group includes the speaker and other interlocutors (cf. von Fintel and Gillies 2011)
- But not only

(15)

| | |
|---|---|
| Sally. | Joe **might** be in China. I didn't see him today. |
| George. | Neither did I. |
| You. | Forgive me for eavesdropping, but Joe can't be in China. He doesn't have his visa yet. |
| Sally. | Oh, really? Then I guess I was wrong. |

(MacFarlane 2014: 244)

- The eavesdropper was not meant to be a part of the conversation and is not part of the context of utterance
- The eavesdropper is included in the context of assessment

NB Intuitions about such cases vary (Knobe and Yalcin 2014)

# Retraction

- PPT claims made earlier can be retracted (MacFarlane 2014, though see Stephenson 2007)

(16)
A. Fish sticks are not tasty.

B. But you said years ago that fish sticks were tasty.

A. ✓I take it back, they aren't tasty.

A'. # They were tasty then, but they aren't tasty any more.

A". # When I said that, I only meant that they were tasty to me then. (MacFarlane 2014: 13-14)

- Retraction as a form of disagreement with your past self epistemics includes more than immediate interlocutors
- MacFarlane (2014): retraction is obligatory when a proposition is not true anymore because the taste has changed
- Ninan (2016): why is retraction obligatory if the original statement is inconsequential?

# Non-indexical contextualism

# Problems with judge relativism

- Technical: overgeneration of *pro* insertion (Pearson 2013)

(17) a. The tea that Pranav and I bought is delicious, # but I didn't like it.

b. Pranav knows that the tea is delicious, # but I didn't like it.

c. Pranav thinks that Natasha thinks that the tea is delicious, # but Natasha didn't like it.

- Pranav's perspective should be available (as a salient individual)

# Problems with judge relativism, cont'd

- Conceptual: no account of the generic/normative effect of PPT statements

(18) a. I like puerh.

b. Puerh is great.

- cf. use in Yelp reviews and in questions

# Pearson (2013)

## Point of departure

Critique of Stephenson and first-person genericity (cf. Moltmann 2010, 2012)

Key components:

- PPTs as Individual-Level Predicates (ILPs)
- ILPs as inherently generic
- The restrictor of the generic is bound
- Fully extensional system: lambda abstractors over individuals at the left periphery of each clause (root and embedded)

# PPTs as ILPs

- **Stage-level predicates** (SLP): temporary properties

(19) *sick, hungry* ...

- **Individual-level predicates** (ILP): permanent properties

(20) *tall, smart* ...

# PPTs as ILPs, cont'd

Based on a series of linguistic diagnostics (Carlson 1980), PPTs behave like ILPs:

- Existential constructions

(21)
a. ✓There were people sick/hungry. SLP
b. # There were people tall. ILP
c. # There were grasshoppers delicious. PPT

- Modification by quantifiers

(22)
a. ✓Natasha is always hungry. SLP
b. # Natasha is always tall. ILP
c. # Grasshoppers are always delicious. PPT

# ILPs as generic

- Chierchia (1995): all ILPs are generic

(23) a. Jane is tall.

b. LF: [ Jane$_i$ [GEN [$t_i$ is tall] ] ]

- Pearson (2013): PPTs are also generic

(24) a. Puerh is delicious.

b. LF: [ Puerh$_i$ [GEN [$t_i$ is delicious] ] ]

- Not clear if this is the right analysis of ILPs (Czypionka and Lauer 2017)
- Other ways of deriving genericity of PPTs: Bhatt and Pancheva (1998); Keshet (2005); Anand (2009); Moltmann (2010, 2012)

# First-person orientation

- The speaker's taste typically matter

(25) The tea is delicious, # but I don't like it.

- Pearson (2013): the speaker emphasizes with contextually salient tasters
- *Identify with* relation *I* to the restrictor of the generic

(26) *I(y,x)* iff *y* identifies with *x*

- Lambda abstractors at the left periphery of each clause that bind individual variables (cf. Percus (2000) on world variables and Hacquard (2010) on event variables)

(27) $[_{CP_{s,et}}\ \mathrm{OP}_1\ \mathrm{OP}_2\ [_{IP_t}\ \ldots pro_1\ \ldots w_2\ ]\ ]$

# The mechanics

(28) The puerh is delicious.

(29) $[\![[_{CP_{s,et}}\ \mathrm{OP}_1\ [_{IP}$ the puerh [ GEN [ $t_i$ is delicious $\mathcal{R}I(y_1, x)$ ] ] ] ] ] $]\!]$
$= \lambda y.\lambda w.GEN_{x,w'}[I(y,x) \rightarrow delicious(\text{the puerh}, x, w')$ ]

# More on Pearson (2013)

- Non-autocentric perspective
  - The speaker is irrelevant and excluded from the domain of the generic

(30) Rotten flesh is delicious.
*The speaker is not the target taster*

- Embedding under attitudes
  - Embedded clauses are of the same type as root clauses; shifting is achieved via obligatory local binding

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