Predicates of personal taste and 'de re' construal

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# Predicates of Personal Taste (PPT) I

> **PPTs, informally**
>
> Expressions of natural language (often: subset of i-level adjectives) seem intuitively sensitive to a "judge" (perspectival/experiential/appraising source), even when not syntactically expressed

(1)  The High Sierra is beautiful (for Mary).

(2)  The soup is delicious (to John).

- Central puzzle: how to capture this sensitivity?
- Put another way: how and where are judges encoded?

# PPT II

- An active debate within semantics and philosophy of language: con-textualism, relativism, expressivism
- Classic data:
    - kinds of disagreement (Kölbel 2003; Lasersohn 2005 and much subse-quent work) and agreement (Moltmann 2010)
    - retraction (MacFarlane 2005, 2014; Marques 2015)
    - genericity / group-relativity (Anand 2009; Bhatt and Pancheva 2006; Moltmann 2010, 2012; Pearson 2013a)
- Limiting our scope today
    - do not discuss the data above or take sides
    - do take for granted that PPTs are in some way special
    - focus on embedding under attitudes
    - but not the kind of embedding typically brought up

# Setting the stage I

> **A seemingly well-known fact**
>
> PPTs in attitudes have to be evaluated wrt to the most local taster (a.m.o Pearson 2013a; Stephenson 2007)

(3) *Context:  Pascal and Mordecai are playing Mastermind. Pascal finds it difficult, while Mordecai easy. Pascal says:*

    a.   ✓ Mordecai thinks that the game is easy$_{MORDECAI}$, while in fact it is difficult$_{PASCAL}$.

    b.   # Mordecai thinks that the game is easy$_{MORDECAI}$ and difficult$_{PASCAL}$.

# Setting the stage II

**A less well-known fact**

PPTs in attitudes allow non-local tasters when in attributive position (mentioned in passim by Sæbø (2009: 337) and Pearson (2013a: 118, fn.15))

(4)    ✓ Mordecai thinks that the difficult$_{PASCAL}$ game is easy$_{MORDECAI}$.

# Analytical disputes

### Pearson (2013a: 118)

Presumably [the difficult game] ... is construed de re and hence outside the scope of the attitude predicate.

### Sæbø (2009: 337)

[I]t is just as easy to handle the phenomenon ... by saying that the judge argument of the attributive adjective is not saturated by the subject of thinks[, but] ... filled by the designated variable.

- So which is it? Can attributive disjoint PPTs be construed 'de dicto', or must they be 'de re'?

# Setting the stage III

### Key observation

PTTs in attitudes allow non-local tasters when in attributive position.

(5)  ✓ Mordecai thinks that the difficult$_{PASCAL}$ game is easy$_{MORDECAI}$.

### This talk

- **Empirically**: Non-local taster only possible when the DP is read 'de re'
- **Analytically**: Is this instrumental in singling out the right approach, or in eliminating not so good ones?
  - Some theories undergenerate and disallow non-local tasters altogether (e.g. Pearson 2013a)
  - Some theories overgenerate and allow non 'de re' readings of DPs (e.g. Stephenson 2007; Sæbø 2009; Stojanovic 2007)

# The analytical take home

- Tasters are necessarily part of evaluation indices
- Choice of taster will
  - force a **corresponding** choice of world (hence, 'de re')
  - be governed by the same restrictions on worlds (Farkas 1997; Percus 2000)

(6)  $\dots w_1$  think [ [$_{DP}$ PPT NP ] PPT ]

(7)  $\dots w_1$  think [ [$_{DP}$ PPT NP ] PPT ]

(8)  $^*\dots w_1$  think [ [$_{DP}$ PPT NP ] PPT ]

# Setting things up

- Issues we wish to avoid
  - Assuming attitude predicates introduce a judge, is it necessarily the attitude holder (Stephenson 2007; Lasersohn 2005)?
  - Can there be distinct judges per 'category' of judgment? (Anand 2009)
- We avoid them by
  - constructing cases where no judge can hold both PPT judgment
  - limiting ourselves to clear within-category opposites

# Perspective clash = 'de re' construal

*Context:    Mary and  Sue are debating several items of clothing in a
catalog. They happen on an item that Sue believes is a  beautiful dress
and Mary an  ugly poncho.   Sue says:*

(9)   COVERT TASTER

   a.   ✓ Mary thought a  beautiful$_{SUE}$ dress was  ugly.              [DE RE]

   b.   # Mary thought a  beautiful$_{SUE}$  poncho was  ugly.           [DE DICTO]

(10)   OVERT TASTER

   a.   ✓ Mary thought a  dress beautiful to me was  ugly.           [DE RE]

   b.   ✓ Mary thought a  poncho  beautiful to me was  ugly.   [DE DICTO]

# Obligatory 'de re'

- Prediction: infelicity in 'de re' blocking environments
- Prediction borne out: *there*-constructions and Free Indirect Discourse do not allow different perspectives

# There I

> Generalization (Keshet 2008, following Musan 1997)
>
> Existential *there* bans 'de re' readings

(11)  Presence vs. absence of a contradiction

    a.   ✓ Mary thinks many  fugitives are  in jail.        [DE RE]

    b.   # Mary thinks there are many  fugitives  in jail.    [DE DICTO]

                                 (Keshet 2008: p. 48, ex. 24)

# There II

*There* and non-local tasters
Speaker's perspective only with an overt taster

(12) COVERT TASTER

    a.  # Mary thought there was a beautiful$_{SP}$ item on sale.    [DE RE]

    b.  ✓ Mary thought there was a  beautiful$_M$ item on sale.  [DE DICTO]

(13) OVERT TASTER
    ✓ Mary thought there was an item beautiful to me on sale.

# Note: other environments

- several environments prohibit mismatched worlds: bare PP relatives, small clause complements of *have*, depictives
- but PPTs are not easily incorporated into these (they are i-level adjectives)

# Free Indirect Discourse I

**Free Indirect Discourse (FID)**

- A hybrid with traits of both direct discourse and canonical embedding under attitudes (Eckardt 2014 and references therein)
- FID blocks 'de re' readings of DPs (Sharvit 2008)

(14)   a.   **Attitude report:**
John thought that the dean liked him that day.
*(possible in a situation where John doesn't believe that the person liking him is the dean)*

b.   **FID**
The dean liked him today, thought John.
*(impossible in a situation where John doesn't believe that the person liking him is the dean)*   (Sharvit 2008: 367, 43b–c)

# Free Indirect Discourse II

**FID and non-local tasters**
Speaker's perspective only with an overt taster

(15)  COVERT TASTER
      Intended: A boring*SPEAKER* game was exciting*MORDECAI*, thought
      Mordecai.
      Resulting: #A boring*MORDECAI* game was exciting*MORDECAI*, thought
      Mordecai.

(16)  OVERT TASTER
      ✓A game boring to me was exciting*MORDECAI*, thought Mordecai.
      (*me ≠ Mordecai*: in FID, personal indexicals such as *I* refer to the narrator;
      Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2008)

# The bottom line

- Non-local tasters require a 'de re' construal
- These facts alone are fully expected of adjectives
- These facts are tricky for theories of PPTs

# Previous approaches

- Can be divided into three classes
    - those that necessarily associate judges with evaluation index (Lasersohn 2005)
    - those that can dissociate judge from evaluation index (Stephenson 2007; Stojanovic 2007; Sæbø 2009)
    - those that necessarily dissociate judge from evaluation index (Pearson 2013a)
- We will show that only the first class derives our facts without additional machinery

# A caveat

- No intent to argue for particular approach to 'de re'
- Will opportunistically assume major options: LF scope (Russell 1905), LF index binding (Percus 2000), and concept generators (Percus and Sauerland 2003)

# Necessarily associate I (Lasersohn 2005)

- indices are (minimally) of type $D_e \times D_s$ (judges and worlds)

(17) $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle j, w \rangle} = \ldots$

- PPTs are sensitive to the judge coordinate of the index

(18) $\llbracket \text{beautiful} \rrbracket^{c, \langle j, w \rangle} = \lambda y. \ 1$ iff $y$ is beautiful for $j$

- attitudes quantify over $\langle att, w \rangle$ pairs

(19) $\llbracket x \ \text{think} \ \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle j, w \rangle} = 1$ iff $\forall w' \in DOX_{x,w} \ \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle x, w' \rangle} = 1$

- everything in scope of attitude evaluated relative to shifted world and attitude holder qua judge

# Necessarily associate II (Lasersohn 2005)

- scope of attitude wrt shifted world and judge

(20)  $[\![x \text{ think} \dots [_{DP} \text{ a beautiful poncho}] \dots]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = 1$
   iff $\forall w' \in DOX_{x,w} [\![\dots [_{DP} \text{ a beautiful poncho}] \dots]\!]^{c,\langle x,w'\rangle} = 1.$

  - only way to 'recover' higher judge is to evaluate attributive PPT against non-local index
  - but intersective modifiers have same index as entire DP (Keshet 2008)
  - Therefore, the entire DP must be read 'de re'

(21)  $[\![x \text{ think} [ \dots [_{DP} \text{ a beautiful poncho}]^{c,\langle j,w@\rangle} \dots]^{c,\langle x,w'\rangle} ]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = 1$
   iff $\forall w' \in DOX_{x,w} \exists z[z \text{ is a poncho in } w@ \text{ and beautiful for } j \dots]$

  - Many unlike theories are similarly correct (MacFarlane 2014; Bylinina et al. 2014)

# Can dissociate I (Stephenson 2007)

- same index type & attitude shifting
- PPTs differ: judge is part of argument structure

(22)  $[\![\text{beautiful}]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = \lambda z.\lambda y$ 1 iff $y$ is beautiful for $z$.

- $z$ can be filled by $PRO_J$ or null pronominal

(23)  a.  $[\![\text{beautiful } PRO_J]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = 1$ iff $\lambda y.$ $y$ is beautiful for $j$

     b.  $[\![\text{beautiful } pro_i]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = 1$ iff $\lambda y.$ $y$ is beautiful for $g(i)$

- If attrib. judge only $PRO_J$, same readings as Lasersohn (2005)
- But use of $pro_i$ could allow 'de dicto' readings with mismatching judges

(24)  $[\![$ $x$ think ... $[_{DP}$ a beautiful $pro_{Susan}$ poncho $]...]\!]^{c,\langle j,w\rangle} = 1$ iff $\forall w' \in DOX_{x,w} \exists z[z$ is a poncho in $w'$ and beautiful for Susan ...$]$

# Can dissociate II (Stojanovic 2007; Sæbø 2009)

- judge is a distinguished variable, $x_0$
- PPTs dyadic (as for Stephenson):

(25)  $[\![\text{beautiful}]\!]^c = \lambda y \lambda z \lambda w. 1$ iff $y$ is beautiful for $z$.

- **main predicate** PPTs: $z$ unsaturated, yielding property bound by attitude (no *shift* per se in attitudes)

(26)  $[\![\text{a poncho is beautiful}]\!]^c = \lambda z \lambda w. 1$ iff $\exists y[$ $y$ is a poncho in $w$ and $y$ is beautiful for $z]$.

- **attributive** PPTs: $z$ filled by $x_0$.

(27)  $[\![\text{beautiful } x_0]\!]^{c, \langle j, w \rangle} = \lambda y \; 1$ iff $y$ is beautiful for $g(0)]$.

- allows different perspectives and 'de dicto' readings, like Stephenson $[\![x \text{ think} \ldots [_{DP} \text{ a beautiful } x_0 \text{ poncho } ] \ldots ]\!]^{c, \langle j, w \rangle} = 1$ iff $\forall w' \in DOX_{x,w}$ $\exists z[z$ is a poncho in $w'$ and beautiful for $g(0) =$Susan $\ldots]$.

# Necessarily dissociate (Pearson 2013a)

- PPTs are dyadic, but
- judge is just a variable bound at LF by a high operator
- additionally: must be bound by closest binder (similar to Farkas/Percus constraints, but now for judges alone)

(29)  $[\lambda x. \ldots$ think $[ \lambda y. \ldots$ beautiful to $y]]$

- Pearson assumes an LF generic operator as well, but irrelevant here (simply admits generic people like the judge)

# Necessarily dissociate (Pearson 2013a)

- for this theory, being read 'de re' is not enough to force non-local perspective
- only way to recover a judge is to move the DP out of the scope of the local binder

(30)   $[\lambda x. \ldots [_{DP}$beautiful to $y]_j \ldots$ think $[ \lambda y. \ldots t_j]]$

- but there are empirical arguments against treating 'de re' as scope-taking (Keshet 2008; Charlow and Sharvit 2014)
- and for attrib. PPTs we can construct scopal paradox arguments

(31)   a.   John thinks that [ on each of his birthdays]$_i$, [$_{DP}$ the disgusting cake he was baked that day$_i$] was tasty.

   b.   [$_{DP}$ the disgusting cake he was baked that day$_{*i}$]$_j$ John thinks that [ on each of his birthdays]$_i$, $t_j$ was tasty.

# Summing up

### PPT non-exceptionalism

PPTs pattern precisely like any non-perspectival predicate wrt 'de re' behavior

- Any theory which strongly links judgment perspectives with worlds of evaluation will get our data right
- But several extent theories do not do this, yielding theories that are either too weak or too strong
- Similarly, any implicit argument theory will be too weak, unless it is supplemented with Musan/Keshet-like constraints

# Things could have been otherwise...

- Data could have pointed to judges obeying Keshet/Musan-like constraints with other judges, but not with worlds/times
- This is essentially what a local-binding account would predict
- That we see judges patterning with worlds and times provides a strong argument for a unified representation

# Contemplating judicicide

- We are kept from abandoning judges wholesale based on
  - faultless disagreement (Kölbel 2003) (pro relativism no.1)
  - retraction (MacFarlane 2005, 2014) (pro relativism no.2)
  - restrictions on main predicates under *find* (Sæbø 2009)
- We suspect the latter could follow from a more rigorous examination of s-selection
- Hence: existence of judges rest on (dis)agreement and retraction

# A loophole

- PPTs have been argued to admit generic/acentric judges (Lasersohn 2005)

(32)    I know that stamp collecting is boring (for people in general), but I find it interesting.

- Generic judges in attributive position admit 'de dicto' readings

(33)    Mary thought a beautiful$_{gen}$ poncho was ugly.

- Suggests that generic judges are not mediated by the evaluation index (see Jackendoff (2007) for a lexical approach)

# Epistemics

- Epistemic modal auxiliaries are often grouped together with PPTs: they are also sensitive to some kind of "judge" (MacFarlane 2014; Pearson 2013b; Schaffer 2011; Stephenson 2007)
- Do epistemics within DPs exhibit the same pattern that we have discussed for PPTs?

# Embedded epistemics: similarities with PPTs

- Only local knower in main predicate position (Hacquard 2010; Stephenson 2007 on auxiliaries):

(34)   a.   ✓ Jane thinks that a thunderstorm is likely$_{JANE}$.

   b.   # Jane thinks that a thunderstorm is likely$_{JANE}$ and impossible$_{SPEAKER}$.

- Non-local knowers allowed in attributive position:

(35)   Jane thinks that an impossible$_{SPEAKER}$ thunderstorm is likely$_{JANE}$.

# Embedded epistemics: dissimilarities with PPTs

- Non-local knowers do not force the DP to be construed 'de re':

(36)   Sue:   Mary is certain that two potential vampires aren't vampires.

- The taster $\neq$ the knower (as we know from Stephenson 2007 for root cases):

(37)   Vampires might$_{SPEAKER}$ be scary.

- Suggests a distinct source for epistemic judges.

Thank you!

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# Pearson (2013a) and concept generators

- Can Pearson's system derive 'de re' readings with distinct judges if one uses concept generators? No.
- Central problem: two different pieces of machinery that don't talk to each other
    - c.g.: handles world of evaluation (and indiv. concept)
    - binder: provides value for argument of PPT

(38)  $[\lambda x[$ Mary thinks $[\lambda y$ CG(a dress that is beautiful to ___) is ugly to  $y$ ]]]

# Pearson (2013a) and concept generators

- perhaps the CG necessarily introduces a local binder

(39) $[\lambda x[$ Mary thinks $[\lambda y$ CG$(\lambda z$ a dress that is beautiful to $z)$ is ugly to $y$ $]]]$

- but how to relate $z$ and $x$ across the intervening binder? One could have the attitude verb take $x$ as an argument and smuggle it into the concept generator, but that seems epicyclic.

(40) $[\lambda x[$ Mary thinks $x$ $[\lambda y$ CG$_x(\lambda z$ a dress that is beautiful to $z)$ is ugly to $y$ $]]]$

- In sum: not impossible to allow the theory to account for the facts, but it requires non-trivial gymnastics