Outlook-Based Semantics:
Simple relativism for discretionary predicates

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1 Introduction

(1) a. Jag tycker att skolmaten är god.
I think that the school food is good.

   b. Jag tycker att det är fel att inte hela Sverige hjälps åt.
I think it's wrong that not all of Sweden helps.

   c. Jag tycker att vi ska ta hand om varandra.
I think that we should take care of each other.

(2) a. Jag tror/#tycker att det är tisdag idag.
I think that it is Tuesday today.

   b. Jag tror/#tycker att jag kommer att vinna.
I think I'm going to win.

   c. Jag tror/#tycker att hon är läkare.
I think that she is a doctor.

Generalization (informal): *tycka* embeds statements that two perfectly rational and well-informed agents may disagree about.

- Taste judgements: different neural pathways to pleasure.

- Moral judgments: controversial. Cognitivism and some form of moral relativism, is implied, at least in the 'folk ideology' of Swedish speakers.

- Among evaluative comparisons (e.g., "chocolate is better than vanilla", or "it is more important to be generous than to be right"), the class of discretionary statements may be delimited as those that express a preference that is part of a rationally permissible preference ordering (Rabinowicz, 2008).

Note: epistemic modals not (always) embeddable under *tycka*:

(3) Jag tror/#tycker att det kanske borjar kvart över.
'I believe/#[tycker] that it maybe starts quarter past.'

So epistemic modals may be a separate phenomenon, pace MacFarlane (2011), Stephenson (2007), etc.

Natural way to make this precise involves *outlooks*.

(4) **Outlook** (like Kölbel's (2002) *perspective*)
An *outlook* determines a value for all sentences, be they matters of fact or opinion. Structurally analogous to possible worlds.

(5) **Proposition**
A *proposition* is a set of outlooks.

(6) **Holding according to an outlook**
A proposition p *holds according to* an outlook o if $o \in p$.

(7) **Perspectival state** (alt. *perspective*)
The *perspectival state* of an agent (in a given situation) is a set of outlooks (those compatible with the agent's beliefs and opinions).

(8) **Accepting a proposition**
An agent a *accepts* proposition p in s iff p holds according to every outlook in the perspectival state of a in s.

(9) **Discretionary proposition** (alt. *subjective proposition*)
If there are perfectly rational and well-informed [ahem] agents a and b and a situation s such that a accepts p in s and b does not, then p is *discretionary*.[1]

(10) **Objective proposition**
A proposition is *objective* if it is not discretionary. (So perfectly rational and well-informed agents always agree on it.)

(11) **Generalization for *tycka*** (official version)
A sentence is embeddable under *tycka* if it denotes a discretionary proposition.[2]

(Extendable to other subjective attitude verbs e.g. *consider* and *feel* in English, and *se semble* in French? See Sæbø 2009.)

Similarities between outlooks and possible worlds:

- "[T]he same proposition (content) can be evaluated differently in different possible worlds. The same goes for perspectives [outlooks]: the same proposition can be evaluated differently in different perspectives [outlooks]." (Kölbel, 2003, 72)

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[1] Cf. Kölbel's (2002) definition of non-objective: "For all p: p is non-objective [i.e., discretionary] iff it is possible that there be thinkers A and B, such that p is true in A's perspective and p is not true in B's perspective." In a footnote, he explains that "possible" means "not ruled out by a priori constraints on language use". Kölbel also talks about a priori constraints on belief formation.

[2] Cf. Sæbø (2009, 333): "A subjective attitude verb is only felicitous with a complement clause whose character, intension or extension is a nonconstant function from judges."

- Outlooks can be paired with a time and a location to yield a circumstance of evaluation.

Main difference between outlooks and possible worlds:

- There is no actual one.

Helps explain *faultless disagreement* (will show in detail):

(12) John: This cake is tasty.
      Mary: No, it's not.

Consequences for pragmatics:

- Norm of assertion (Quality-1): A speaker should accept the propositions one expresses (hence typical *tasty to me* inference).

- Context set (Stalnaker, 1978) is a set of outlooks that is publicly accepted by all interlocutors; successful assertion means establishment of common ground in both the formal and the colloquial sense (hence relevance of other interlocutors' opinions).

- Conversationalists aim not to find the actual world but to build a common perspective. Disagreement can result in weakened social ties or exclusion.

Hence non-informative commentaries and their connection-building role:

(13) That was an interesting talk today!

Egan (2010, 10-11) puts the point more eloquently and colorfully.

> One very major role that aesthetic discourse plays is a sort of connection-building role, in which people discover commalities in the sorts of things that they enjoy, appreciate, or despise. This can be a substantial part of the process of building and maintaining relationships, and in establishing and maintaining ties to communities and groups. Very many groups and subcultures are defined, at least in part, by the common aesthetic sensibilities of their members (and the contrast between their shared aestheic sensibilities of their outsiders). Think of, for example, such subcultures as goths, punk rockers, ravers, trekkies, bikers, and so on.
> I propse that we should think of this effect of successful aesthetic assertions, and successful resolutions of aesthetic disputes, of inducing mutual self-attribution of certain dispositions to have a praticular sort of response to a particular (kind of) object, as the central business of assertions and disputes about taste, and not as a mere side effect.

Complex vs. simple relativism

- Complex relativism (Lasersohn, Egan, MacFarlane, Stephenson): possible worlds are *paired with judges* to determine a circumstance of evaluation:

$$[[\phi]]^{c;w,j} = 1...$$

- Simple relativism (Kölbel, me): possible worlds are *replaced by outlooks* in the circumstance of evaluation:

$$[[\phi]]^{c;o} = 1...$$

Virtues of simple relativism:

- Simple relativisms are equal to Kaplanian semantics in simplicity $\Rightarrow$ not subject to a *ceteris paribus* argument on grounds of simplicity.

- Simple in a standard way $\Rightarrow$ methodological advantages.

- Not as expressive $\Rightarrow$ certain desirable results follow without stipulation.

- More substantively: avoids the critique of relativism levelled by Stojanovic (2007), who says that it does not actually explain faultless disagreement despite appearances. As we will show, her criticism does not apply to simple relativism.

Contributions of present paper beyond Kölbel's work:

- Agents are associated with a *set* of outlooks

- Formal model-theoretic framework (*outlook-based semantics*)

- More modelling and discussion of consequences for pragmatics

- Different norm of belief pertaining to 'faultlessness'

- Evaluation of framework in light of criticism that has been directed at relativism over the 12 years since his work was published (some of which lumps his theory in with others, perhaps because it was not adequately formalized)

- Additional empirical support

STRUCTURE	PARAMS	TRUTH CONDITIONS	LABEL
fun(x)	c; w	x is fun in w	plain objectivist
fun(x,y)	c; w	$\exists y$[x is fun to y in w]	existential objectivist
fun(x,y)	c; w	Gen y [x is fun to y in w]	generic objectivist
fun(x,i)	c; w	x is fun to sp(c) in w	speaker-contextualist
fun(x,g)	c; w	x is fun to group(c) in w	group-contextualist
fun(x,j)	c; w	x is fun to judge(c) in w	judge-contextualist
fun(x,*one*)	c; w	Gen y [sp(c) identifies with y $\rightarrow$ x is fun to y in w]	1st-person genericity
fun(x)	n/a	n/a	expressivist
fun(x)	c; w,j	x is fun to j in w	judge-relativist
fun(x,PRO$_J$)	c; w,j	x is fun to j in w	mixed-relativist
fun(x)	c; o	x is fun in o	simple relativist

Table 1: Some theories of 'x is fun'

2 Previous theories and desiderata

Objectivism. Propositions denote sets of possible worlds; they are true if the set contains the actual world. Variants:

- plain: x is fun in w
  (no faultless disagreement)

- existential: $\exists y$[x is fun to y in w]
  (too weak)

- generic: Gen y [x is fun to y in w]
  (doesn't explain speaker-orientation)

Assertions of personal taste typically bear on speaker's judgments (Pearson, 2013):

(14) Linguists typically write their papers using LATEX, but {I use, Mary uses} Microsoft Word.

(15) The cake that Mary and I ate was tasty, but {#I, she} didn't like it.

Supposedly taste predicates are generic (Moltmann, 2010; Pearson, 2013):

(16) *When Nutella is tasty, Mary is happy.

But:

(17) When Mary is stinky, John leaves the room.

Expressivism.   *This is fun! = Whee!*

Problem 1 (Frege-Geach problem; but see e.g. Cantwell (2013) for expressivist logic):

(18) If there is a loop, the roller coaster is fun.
      There is a loop.
      Therefore, the rollercoaster is fun.

Problem 2:

(19) a. A: This is fun!   b. A: Whee!
          B: That's not true!   B: #That's not true!

More generally, does not distinguish between expressive content and descriptive content, leaving no room for an explanation for why expressives behave differently from other expressions with respect to, for example, their projection behavior (Simons et al., 2010).

Contextualism.   *X is fun* means *X is fun for J*, where *J* is the contextually-determined judge. Judge could be:

- speaker

- group of interlocutors

- any relevant judge

- maybe 'people I identify with' (Moltmann, 2010; Pearson, 2013).

– problems for speaker version

(20) A: Frog legs taste good to me.
      B: #No, Frog legs don't taste good to me.
      (Example adapted from Moltmann (2010, 190).)

(21) A: This soup tastes great.
      B: You're entitled to your opinion of course but #(I think) it's horrible.

(22) Is the soup good?

(23) a. #The cake must be tasty, but I wouldn't like it.
      b. The cake must be tasty, but I wouldn't like it because I don't like chocolate.

Pearson's generalization: "[an] agent's tastes are relevant unless something about the context renders them irrelevant—not having tasted the item, perhaps, or not being among its 'target audience'."

– problems for group version

(24) Mary: This is not fun.
John: Yes it is!

Lasersohn (2005): John would be "acting irrationally, or ignoring what Mary said".

(25) Fisher Shoemaker, you really need to pay more attention. I know you don't think so, but social studies is important.

(26) The cat thinks that the cat food is tasty.
$\not\Rightarrow$ The cat thinks that the cat food is tasty to us.

– general problems for contextualism

1. Can account for faultlessness and disagreement but not at the same time ($\approx$ what Lasersohn (2005) said).

2. In some cases, it is not appropriate to insert *to/for X* for any imaginable choice of *X*.

(27) A: It's messed up #(to me/you/us/people like me), isn't it?
B: Yeah, it is.

(28) "That's amazing #(to me/you/us/people like me)!" exclaimed Jack, sincerely.
"I know!" agreed the monster. "And it does a lot more!..."

Complex relativism. Truth is relative not only to worlds but also to judges.

- Lasersohn-style: possible worlds are paired with judges/agents to determine a circumstance of evaluation:

$$[[\phi]]^{c;w,j} = 1...$$

- Egan-style: using centered worlds $\langle w, a \rangle$ (which is equivalent to adding a judge parameter, as Stephenson (2007) points out)[3]

- MacFarlane-style: invokes a context of assessment

Stojanovic's (2007) critique: relativism (as implemented by Lasersohn, etc.) does not actually explain the faultlessness of faultless disagreement phenomena.

Concerning a disagreement dialogue between Tarek and Inma, she writes (p. 697):

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[3]Comes along with a view of assertion as self-ascription. Seems to predict that one ought to be able to say *It being Tuesday today is one of my properties* or *Carrots being tasty is a property shared by everyone I know.* Also seems to predict that if someone says *Beyoncé was fabulous last night,* one can respond *Me, too* in order to agree.

Now, if Tarek intends the content that he is asserting to be evaluated for truth at himself, and if Inma intends her content to be evaluated for truth at herself, that will undermine the idea that their disagreement is genuine and rational. Both of them, given SC, know that one and the same content may take different truth values when evaluated at different judges. They also know that one's assertion and the other's denial of the same content are inconsistent only when evaluated with respect to the same judge. Hence if each party intends the asserted content to be evaluated at himself or herself, and if this is mutually clear between them, then they will realize that there is no clash in truth value between their claims (when evaluted as they intend them to be), and that their "disagreement" is thus nothing more than a divergence in preferences.

3 A simple relativist proposal

3.1 Outlook-based semantics

Again, an agent's *perspectival state* is a set of outlooks (whereas Kölbel has a 1-to-1 relation here). So we can make sense of:

(29) A: What do you think about the soup?
B: I don't know what I think.

An agent's perspectival state varies from situation to situation; we can capture this via an accessibility relation R_a on W for each agent a. The perspectival state of a according to a given outlook o is then the set of outlooks accessible via R_a from o. The set of these relations is $\mathcal{R}$.[4]

An outlook-based model is a tuple:

$$M = \langle D, D_t, W, A, \mathcal{R}, I \rangle$$

where:

- $D = D_e$ is a set of individuals

- D_t is a set of truth values: T, F, and $\#_t$

- W is a set of outlooks

- A is the set of agents, a subset of D

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[4]A fancier version might follow Stalnaker (2008) in having a single accessibility relation over centered worlds. This would not affect the nature of the public content, which would remain a set of outlooks, just as Stalnaker's public contents are sets of possible worlds.

- $\mathcal{R}$ is a set of accessibility relations R_a, one for each $a \in A$, each being a binary relation on W specifying the perspectival state for each agent at each outlook

- I is a valuation function assigning to each non-logical constant in the language an *intension*, which is a function from outlooks to extensions of the appropriate type. For the extension of an expression α at outlook o we write $I_o(\alpha)$.

Types: The basic types are e and t, and complex types are defined recursively as usual: If σ and τ are types, then $\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle$ is the type of functions from D_σ to D_τ.[5]

If α is of type τ, then for any outlook o, $I_o(\alpha) \in D_\tau$.

Expressions are interpreted with respect to a model M, an outlook o, a variable assignment g, and a context of utterance c, which is a tuple determining among other things the speaker (or author) of the utterance c_A and the world/outlook of the utterance c_W (Kaplan, 1977).

So we have the standard semantic clauses:

- If α is a constant, then $[[\alpha]]^{M,o,g,c} = I_o(\alpha)$.

- If u is a variable, then $[[u]]^{M,o,g,c} = g(u)$.

- $[[\mathrm{I}]]^{M,o,g,c} = c_A$.

Application and abstraction:

- If α is of type $\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle$ and β is of type σ, then $[[\alpha(\beta)]]^{M,o,g,c} = [[\alpha]]^{M,o,g,c}([[\beta]]^{M,o,g,c})$.

- If u is a variable of type τ then $[[\lambda u[\alpha]]]^{M,o,g,c} =$ the function f such that for all d: $f(d) = [[\alpha]]^{M,o,g[x \to d],c}$

Connectives: Weak Kleene ('undefined' means 'nonsense'). Plus presupposition operator:

- $[[\partial[\phi]]]^{M,o,g,c} = \#_t$ unless $[[\phi]]^{M,o,g,c} = \mathrm{T}$; otherwise T.

Modal operators:

- If α is an expression of type e such that $[[\alpha]]^{M,o,g,c} \in A$, and ϕ is an expression of type t, then:
  $[[\Box_\alpha \phi]]^{M,o,g,c} = \mathrm{T}$ if for all o' such that $R_{[[\alpha]]^{M,o,g,c}}(o,o')$: $[[\phi]]^{M,o',g,c} = \mathrm{T}$, and F otherwise.

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[5]I also assume that for every type τ, there is an 'undefined object' $\#_\tau$, following Haug (2013) and Coppock & Beaver (2014). This is not crucial; it is just useful for the analysis of presupposition.

We recursively define a translation relation $\rightsquigarrow$ from trees to expressions of this logic. Some lexical entries:

1. *the* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda P \iota x[P(x)]$

2. *I/me* $\rightsquigarrow \mathrm{I}$

3. *he$_i$* $\rightsquigarrow v_i$

4. *doctor* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda x[\mathrm{DOCTOR}(x)]$

5. *tasty* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda x[\mathrm{TASTY}(x)]$

6. *not* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda P \lambda x[\neg P(x)]$

7. *think* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda p_t \lambda x[\Box_x[p]]$

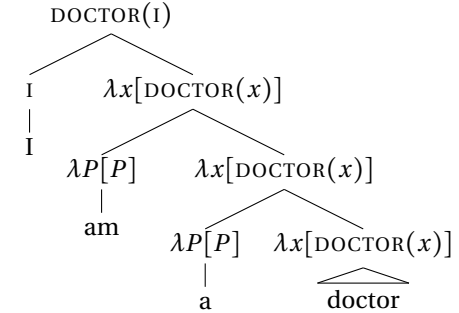8. *tycka* $\rightsquigarrow \lambda p_t \lambda x[\partial[\mathrm{DISCRETIONARY}(p)] \wedge \Box_x[p]]$

Composition rule(s):

(30) **Functional Application** (FA)
If $\alpha \rightsquigarrow \alpha'_{\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle}$ and $\beta \rightsquigarrow \beta'_\sigma$, and γ is an expression consisting of α and β, then:
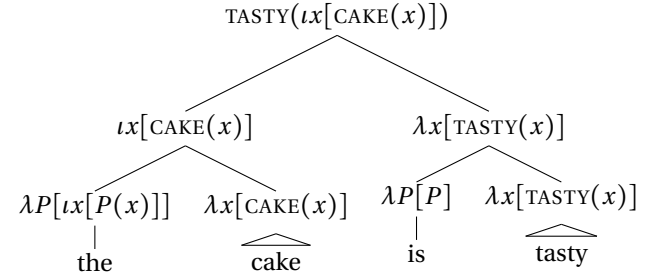
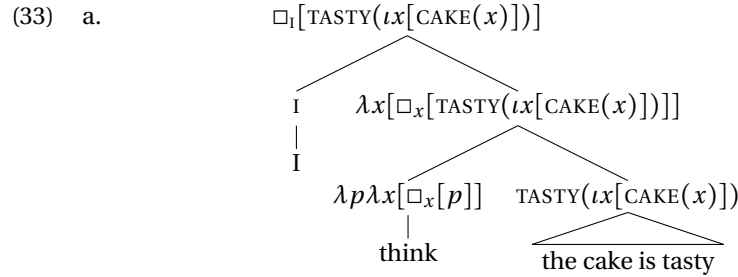$$\gamma \rightsquigarrow \alpha'(\beta')$$

Examples:

(31) a.

b. $[[\mathrm{DOCTOR}(\mathrm{I})]]^{M,o,g,c} = \mathrm{T}$ if $I_o(\mathrm{DOCTOR})(c_A) = \mathrm{T}$; else F.

(32) a.

b. $[[\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])]]^{M,o,g,c} = \#_t$ unless there is a unique cake in o. If there is, then, letting s refer to the cake, the value is T if $I_o(\text{TASTY})(s) = $ T; else F.

(33) a. $\square_I[\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])]$

I
|
I

$\lambda x[\square_x[\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])]]$

$\lambda p \lambda x[\square_x[p]]$ $\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])$
|
think   the cake is tasty

b. $[[\square_I[\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])]]]^{M,o,g,c} = $ T if for all o' such that $R_{c_A}(o,o')$: $[[\text{TASTY}(\iota x[\text{CAKE}(x)])]]^{M,o',g,c} = $ T; else F.

Let us say that the *proposition expressed* by a sentence ϕ, with respect M, g and c, is the set of outlooks o such that $[[\phi]]^{M,o,g,c} = $ T.

Assume that in the following dialogues, the speakers accept the propositions they express in the world of the context (as formalized below), and that the proposition expressed by B's sentence is the set of outlooks where A's sentence has value F.

(34) A: The cake is tasty.
B: No, it's not.

(35) A: I am a doctor.
B: (#No,) I'm not.

(36) A: I think the cake is tasty.
B: (#No,) I don't think so.[6]

Then the speakers disagree in (34) but not (35) or (36), in the following sense.

(37) **Disagreement**
Agents a and b *disagree* with respect to proposition p in w iff a accepts p in w and b rejects p in w.[7]

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[6]Honestly, (36) is not as bad as (35), I assume because the embedded clause can be at-issue. But *This cake is tasty to me/ No, this cake is not tasty to me* is on a par with (35).

[7]This definition satisfies a number of the criteria for disagreement laid out by MacFarlane (2007), who points out that only world-mates may disagree, and that disagreement can span the boundaries of a conversation (for example, *Fish sticks are delicious* said at various stages of one's life). It also accounts for the fact that if A says *Joe is sitting* at 2pm and B says *Joe is not sitting* at 3pm, then it does not follow that they disagree, because, as Lasersohn (2005) pointed out, disagreement is a matter of contents rather than characters, and these two sentences do not have conflicting contents.

(38) **Accepting a proposition** (repeated from above)
An agent a *accepts* proposition p in w iff p holds according to every outlook in the perspectival state of a in w.

(39) **Rejecting a proposition**
An agent a *rejects* proposition p in w iff p holds according to no outlook in the perspectival state of a in w.

Assuming *no* is a marker of disagreement, we have an explanation for its corresponding acceptability or lack thereof in these dialogues.

We also get:

(40) John thinks that carrots are tasty and Mary thinks they're not
→ John and Mary disagree about whether carrots are tasty.

So we have disagreement. Do we have *faultless* disagreement?

Being 'at fault': Saying/believing something that is objective and false. We have no actual world but we can still have facts.

(41) **Fact** (in an outlook)
A *fact* in o is a proposition that any ideal agent would accept in o.

(42) **Objective**
A proposition is *objective* if it or its negation is a fact in every outlook in W.[8]

(43) **Norm of belief**
An agent should not take an objective proposition to hold in o if it is not a fact in o.

Applies only to objective propositions ⇒ genuine faultlessness.[9]

Stojanovic (2007) says in footnote 3 that her critique of relativism applies to Kölbel's (2002) proposal as well, but does not explain why. As we have just seen in detail, it does not apply.

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[8]Cf. Kölbel's (2002, 102) definition of objectivity: "For all p: p is objective iff it is not possible that there be thinkers A and B such that p is true in A's perspective and p is not true in B's perspective." By "possible", he explains in a footnote that he means "not ruled out by a priori constraints on language use". Then objective truth and falsity are defined in terms of objectivity: "A content is objectively true (false) just if it is objective and true (false) in everyone's (or equivalently someone's) perspective" (p. 102). Here we have to insert something like "under ideal conditions" to get a coherent statement; clearly people can believe falsehoods. With such an adjustment, I believe these definitions would capture the same intuition as the present proposal.

[9]This characterization of fault diverges radically from that of Kölbel (2002). He says, "One makes a mistake if one believes a proposition [or content] that is not true in one's own perspective (at that time)" (p. 100). On the present story, one cannot believe a proposition that is not true in one's own perspective, so such a situation would never arise.

3.2 Outlook-based pragmatics

Stephenson (2007) relies on a strange asymmetry: the relevant judge is just the speaker for the purposes of the norm of assertion, and yet the relevant judge is the whole group for the purpose of the common ground.

- In conversation, participants are "trying to align their world views, not only with regard to factual beliefs [...], but also with regard to subjective matters such as what is tasty and which epistemic options are still open."

- Proposes to "treat the context set as a set of world-time-judge triples instead of worlds or world-time pairs."

- "[F]or all the triples in the context set for a conversation, the judge element represents the plurality of the group of participants in the conversation."

- Norm of assertion: "In order for A to assert that S, A only needs to believe that S is true as judged by A."

- "but if A's assertion is accepted by the other speakers and added to the common ground, it has the same effect as adding the proposition that S is true as judged by the group of conversational participants. This shows that the relevant judge for the purposes of the norm of assertion is just the speaker, and not the entire group of conversational participants."

This seems to get the right result (see Appendix), but we can get that result without the strange-looking asymmetry, only with a minor adaptation of Stalnaker (1978).

- A proposition is *presupposed* if and only if it is common ground among the participants in the conversation.

- The *context set* is a set of outlooks, the live options as to what the interlocutors might agree on. If a proposition is presupposed then it holds according to all outlooks in the context set.

- To *assert* a proposition is to propose to reduce the context set so that all of the outlooks incompatible with the proposition are eliminated.

- An assertion is *successful* if the proposal is accepted and the context set is reduced in this way.

Because an assertion reduces the context set so that the content of the assertion becomes a presupposition, and because presuppositions are propositions that all interlocutors are publicly committed to, a successful assertion bears on the outlooks of all of the interlocutors.
⇒ effect of setting the judge parameter to the group of interlocutors.

Speaker-oriented norm of assertion:

(44) **Sincere assertion**
Let p be the proposition expressed by ϕ with respect to M, g and c.
An agent a asserts ϕ *sincerely* in c (given M and g) if a accepts p in c_W.

⇒ norm of assertion is speaker's own judgment.

We just derived Stephenson's asymmetry almost without lifting a finger.

The acquaintance inference—that *This cake is tasty* implies that the speaker has tasted the cake—can potentially be derived via Grice's second quality maxim "Do not say what you lack adequate evidence for."

Quantity, Relevance maxims can be defined via Questions Under Discussion in the style of Groenendijk & Stokhof (1984) and Groenendijk & Roelofsen (2009). You can also make it dynamic with outlook-assignment pairs. Plug and play.

Summary: OBS is simpler than canonical relativism (and easier to use/extend) – all we did was take *away* the actual world from the Kaplanian picture, so it's simpler even than that – and yet it achieves more: avoiding Stojanovic's objection, and capturing the effects of Stephenson's stipulations automatically.

A Appendix

Since successful assertion depends on consensus, people will say ϕ instead of 'I think that ϕ' more when it is likely to be accepted.[10]

(45) F: We take the next one
A: Yes, this is not so good either
B: Here we have a good example of bad music then
A: But this is really bad music
B: **Yes this is bad music**

(46) F: Is this something you like?
A: It's bloody good music actually
B: [LAUGHS] **I don't think it's that good**. I don't think that there's any melody really, to dig to.

The chances of success are improved by having a crowd that might side with you and over-rule the person you disagree with.

(47) Eric: I say we have a trial. We'll let Lex answer to a jury of his peers.
Daley (angrily): **That's ridiculous!**
Jackson: **No, it's not.**

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[10]Examples and observation from Blomqvist (2014), originally in Swedish, from a led group discussion with teenagers about their tastes in music.

Narrator 2: Everyone turns to look at Jackson.
Jackson: We're all alone here. We need to have a fair way to handle problems like this. A trial is a good idea.

As Blomqvist (2014) points out, this leads to the formation of a subgroup with common ground, excluding the dissenter. To avoid this outcome, it is rational to avoid disagreement. This might be seen in the following example (from Blomqvist 2014):

(48) F: But you don't like this?
A: No
F: What is it that you don't like then?
A: I don't think it's any… they just stand and talk […]
B: I admire the lyric-writers of hip-hop songs, because the lyrics are so awfully long in hip-hop songs [continues to explain why he admires writers of hip-hop lyrics][…]
A: The hip-hop that I do like **in that case**, if one can call it hip-hop, would be Just D. I think they're good […]

Directly contradicting what someone else says is not only risky, but also normally face-threatening, as it implies that the other person is wrong, but this face-threat can be mitigated if the other person's wrongness is due to their being too modest or too kind. This increases the chances of success.

(49) Mr-BREHIER: Here we go. Wait until you taste that. Now we can serve it plain like that or with an old chutney made with pecans, cilantro. **It's a little hot, huh?**
APPLEGATE: **No, it's wonderful.**

(50) A: Why? Why would you do that?
B: Because I didn't wanna be ugly anymore.
A: Oh, baby. **You're not ugly**.
B: **Yes, I am**. I know you don't think so, but I am.

Absent these factors, you will need a strong argument. Contrary to what some authors have written, this is not pointless even in matters of taste, because tastes are affected by associations and experiences.

(51) A: *Fast **det är verkligen inte gott**! Jag fattar inte varför det blev så jävla trendigt där 1993…*
'Except it's really not good! I don't get why it got so damn trendy there in 1993…'
B: *Jo **det är visst gott**. Smakar ju som kaffe och äppelkaka med kanel. Mumma! Sen tar man sig en norsk tequila på det och sen är det jävlar fart i baren.*
'Yes [on the contrary] it is definitely good. Tastes you know like coffee and apple pie with cinnamon. Yummy! Then you have a Norwegian tequila with that and then it's [party time like hell?] in the bar.'

(52) A: I must warn you of the White Russian. **It is one of the most disgusting drinks ever concocted**. Kahlua with your coffee in the morning is much better.
B: Are you nuts? **It's delicious!** Do you not like chocolate milk?

If you don't want to impose your opinion on others, but you don't want others' opinions imposed on you, then you can say *I don't know*. In that case, you say 'I think ϕ' not just 'ϕ'.

(53) A: The soup is disgusting.
B: I don't know, I think it tastes good.
B: I don't know, it tastes good to me.
B: #I don't know, it tastes good.

Succesful assertion of bare ϕ requires acceptance from all participants.

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