

A Non-Alethic Approach to Faultless Disagreement

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Abstract

This paper motivates and describes a non-alethic approach to faultless disagreement involving predicates of personal taste (PPTs). In section 1 I describe problems faced by Sundell's (2011) indexicalist approach, and MacFarlane's (2014) relativist approach. In section 2 I develop an alternative, non-alethic, approach. The non-alethic approach is broadly expressivist in that it endorses both the *negative semantic thesis* that simple sentences containing PPTs do not semantically encode *complete* propositions and the *positive pragmatic thesis* that such sentences are used to express *evaluative mental states*. Finally, in section 3 I explain how the non-alethic approach explains faultless disagreement.

The following conversational exchange is a paradigmatic instance of *faultless disagreement*:

(A)

John: (A1) Licorice is tasty.

Mary: (A2) No, Licorice is *not* tasty. (A3) It tastes like medicine.¹

In this exchange Mary denies John's assertion, and thus the exchange manifests that John and Mary disagree as to whether or not licorice is tasty. Let us call this the *disagreement intuition*. Nonetheless, it seems that neither John nor Mary is *wrong*. Whether or not licorice is tasty is, as we say, *a mere matter of opinion*, or *subjective*, and thus it does not seem right to say that one of them must be wrong.² Let us call this the *faultless intuition*. Taken together these intuitions are puzzling: If they *disagree*, how can it be that neither is *wrong*?³ The purpose of this paper is first to motivate and then to describe a *non-alethic* approach to faultless disagreement that contrasts with the *alethic* approaches of *indexicalism* (sometimes called *contextualism*) and *semantic relativism*.⁴ In section 1 I present a critical review of Sundell's (2011) indexical approach and MacFarlane's (2007, 2014) relativist approach. My goal in this first section is not so much to refute these alethic approaches as it is to illustrate the sorts of difficulties they face and thereby motivate a non-alethic approach. In section 2 I develop a non-alethic, *broadly* expressivist, account of predicates of personal taste

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¹ For the sake of simplicity I have presented an example which involves two uses of the generic noun 'licorice'. Such terms raise some issues that are independent of the questions I will consider; to avoid such issues one could replace both occurrences of 'licorice' in (A) with 'this piece of licorice' and further stipulate that the two uses of the complex demonstrative refer to the same piece of licorice.

² The faultless intuition is often mischaracterized as being that both speakers say something *true*. The inference from "neither is at fault," to "both speak truly" begs the question in favor of alethic approaches.

³ Here I use 'faultless disagreement' to designate such puzzling exchanges, without precluding the possibility that one or more of the puzzling intuitions is based upon some sort of error.

⁴ Limitations of space prevent me from considering a *minimalist* approach. (See Cappelen 2008.) Also, I consider *nonindexical contextualism* to be a form of relativism.

(PPTs). The account is *broadly* expressivist in that it endorses both the *negative semantic thesis* that simple sentences containing PPTs (even relative to a context of utterance or context of assessment) do not semantically encode propositions, and the *positive pragmatic thesis* that the *illocutionary point* of asserting simple sentences containing PPTs is to *pragmatically express* non-doxastic mental states. It should be noted that the way the non-alethic approach developed here supports these two theses differs significantly from the way they are supported by the classic emotivism of Ayer (1936), or even the more sophisticated versions of expressivism advanced by Blackburn (1988) and Gibbard (1990, 2003). Finally, in section 3 I apply the non-alethic approach to exchange (A) and illustrate how it explains the seemingly contradictory *faultless* and *disagreement* intuitions.

1. A Critical Review of Two Alethic Approaches

The phenomenon of faultless disagreement involves the notions of *disagreement* and *denial*, and thus some clarification of these notions is in order. *Disagreement*, in the relevant sense of the term, is a relational state that obtains between rational agents.⁵ I doubt that a precise analysis of the concept of *disagreement* can be provided, but following MacFarlane (2014, 120), I propose that two subjects are in a state of disagreement just in case they instantiate *noncotenable mental states*, where two mental states are noncotenable just in case it would be irrational for one subject to instantiate both states at the same time. Slightly more precisely, where ϕ and ψ are intentional mental states, *x and y disagree with regard to ϕ* just in case *x* instantiates ϕ , *y* instantiates ψ , and ψ is *noncotenable* with ϕ . This account, appropriately in my view, leaves the notion of *disagreement* no more precise than the notion of *rationality*. It also allows for there to be various sorts of disagreement. In the paradigmatic case of doxastic states there are different ways in which two states might be noncotenable. First, the attitude-component of the states may differ, while the content remains the same. For example, one could not simultaneously hold both the attitude of *belief* and the attitude of *doubt* toward the content *that Obama was born in Africa* without being irrational. (Nor could one even believe to different *degrees* this one content.) Second, two doxastic states with the same attitude are noncotenable if the

⁵ Particular (token) *disputes* are also referred to as *disagreements*, but this is not the relevant sense of the term.

propositional contents of the states are truth-conditionally inconsistent. For example, believing *that Obama was born in Africa* and believing *that Obama was not born in Africa*, are noncotenable.⁶

Whereas *disagreement* is a relation between rational agents, *denial*, as I use this technical term, is a *speech act* that relates two adjacent utterances in a conversation. The task of correctly characterizing this speech act will be taken up in section 2.2, but as a working definition let us say that an utterance *d* is a *denial* of an utterance *t* (the *target* of the denial) just in case (i) *d* immediately follows *t* in a conversation; and (ii) *d* is the utterance of an appositional ‘no,’ (or ‘nope’, ‘nuh uh’, etc.) followed by an utterance the speaker of *d* presents as being *in some way* incompatible with *t*.⁷ Often, but not always, the sentence following the appositional ‘no’ is the negation of the sentence of which *t* is an utterance; I will refer to this common form of denial, of which (A2) is an instance, as *echoic denial*.

The puzzle posed by exchanges such as (A) can now be stated with more precision: Given that Mary’s echoic denial (A2) of John’s target assertion (A1) is felicitous, and moreover manifests that John and Mary are in a state of disagreement, how can it be that we nonetheless judge that neither John nor Mary is wrong?

1.1 Sundell’s (2011) Indexicalist Approach

Sundell models his indexicalist analysis of PPTs after Kennedy and McNally’s (2005) analysis of gradeable-adjective predicates such as ‘is tall’. Thus Sundell assumes that ‘is tasty’ is associated, as a matter of its meaning, with a *degree scale*.⁸ In the case of ‘tall’, the scale is assumed to be an ordered sequence of *heights*. The predicate ‘is tall’ (in which ‘tall’ appears in its *positive form*, without a degree modifier) is then analyzed as an indexical that picks out different height-properties in different contexts of utterance, depending

⁶ Note that the noncotenability of mental states is partially defined in terms of inconsistent truth-conditional content. As a consequence, I am precluded from explaining the latter in terms of the former. Thus my distinction between *attitude-based noncotenability* and *content-based noncotenability* is not equivalent to Schroeder’s (2008, 48) distinction between “B-type inconsistency” and “A-type inconsistency.”

⁷ It should not be *assumed* that the incompatibility of the *utterances* requires that the *sentences* uttered encode incompatible truth-conditional content.

⁸ In addition to context-sensitivity along a degree-of-height dimension, many indexicalists propose that ‘is tall’ is context-sensitive along a *contrast-class* dimension. Depending upon how tense is treated, such predicates may also be context-sensitive along a temporal dimension. Moreover, Glanzberg (2007, 10) notes that some gradeable adjectives may be context sensitive (or, more plausibly, *polysemous*) in an additional way. For example, some uses of ‘smart’ may be associated with a *book-smart*, scale while other uses may be associated with a *street-smart* scale. It is not clear whether this sort of context-sensitivity of scale is distinct from the context sensitivity of contrast-class, but, as Glanzberg notes, such scale context-sensitivity is clearly a distinct from the alleged *standard* context-sensitivity. For the sake of simplicity, I ignore context-sensitivity associated with contrast-class, temporal dimensions, and scale-variability whenever possible.

upon what *degree-of-height* is operative in the context. That is, in a context of utterance c a degree-of-height δ – a point on the height scale – is taken to be operative, and as a consequence in c the predicate ‘is tall’ expresses the property, *having a height at least as great as δ* .⁹

According to Sundell, however, the predicate ‘is tasty’ exhibits not only this familiar *degree context-sensitivity* – corresponding to variance in *how tasty* something must be to in order to satisfy ‘is tasty’ – but also exhibits a *standard* context-sensitivity, where a *standard* is (or at least determines¹⁰) a *mapping* from potentially tasty things to points on the tastiness-scale. The points on this scale thus correspond to degrees of *how good* something tastes, but *where* something falls on the scale is determined only relative to a contextually operative *standard*. Thus, according to Sundell, ‘Licorise is tasty’ is context-sensitive in a radically different way than is ‘Ivan is tall’. In the case of ‘Ivan is tall’, once the relevant degree δ is established in the context of utterance, the actual world all by itself determines a truth value; there is no need for something else, in addition to the objective height of Ivan, to determine whether or not Ivan’s height falls above or below δ on the height scale. Or, as I will hereafter put it, given a degree-of-height δ , the character of ‘is tall’ suffices to determine a *complete intension*, i.e. an intension that that, given only a possible world, determines an extension. In the case of ‘Licorice is tasty’, however, something else, beyond the objective taste of licorice, is needed to determine whether or not licorice falls above or below δ on the tastiness scale. Even given a contextually operative degree-of-tastiness δ , in the absence of a *standard* there is *no fact of the matter* whether or not licorice is above or below δ on the tastiness-scale. Or is I will hereafter put it, unless it is supplemented by a contextually operative *standard*, the character of ‘is tasty’ determines only an *incomplete intension*, an intension that that, given only a possible world, fails to determine an extension.

Sundell’s (2011) indexicalist account of exchanges such as (A) proceeds in two steps. First Sundell argues that felicitous “linguistic denial” (Sundell, 2011, 273) does not require two utterances that semantically encode incompatible truth-conditional contents. So, Mary’s denial (A2) of John’s target assertion (A1) can be felicitous even if (A1) and (A2) do not encode incompatible truth-conditional content, and thus there is no reason to suppose that either John or Mary must be wrong. Thus the first step enables Sundell to account for

⁹ This is a slightly simplified version of Kennedy and McNally’s (2005) semantics for gradeable adjectives.

¹⁰ One could take such a mapping to be determined by a judge or experiencer (or group of such) that is operative in a context of utterance.

the *faultless intuition*. The second step is thus to explain why such exchanges – despite the absence of incompatible truth-conditional content – manifest *disagreement* between the speakers.¹¹ Sundell’s second step, if successful, would enable Sundell to explain the *disagreement intuition*.

Sundell’s first step is straightforward, since it is widely recognized that there are many varieties of denial, only some of which involve speakers uttering sentences that encode (in the contexts of utterance) incompatible truth-conditional content.¹² Sundell notes, for example, that in a felicitous *implicature denial* such as

- (20) (a) Gary ate some crackers and went to bed.
(b) Nuh uh, he went to bed and ate some crackers. (Sundell, 2011, 275)

the speakers do not utter sentences that encode incompatible truth-conditional content. For reasons that will become apparent, I note here that appreciation of the wide variety of felicitous denials warrants a slightly stronger conclusion than the one Sundell draws. Consider an instance of a *presupposition denial*:

- (B) John: (1) Vulcan is the second smallest planet.
Mary: (2) No, Vulcan is not the second smallest planet. (3) There is no such thing.

According to a Strawson-inspired (1950) view of empty proper names, utterances (B1) and (B2) suffer from presupposition failure, and as a result they semantically encode *no* truth-conditional content. Nonetheless, Mary’s presupposition denial (B2) is perfectly felicitous. Thus, assuming Strawson’s view, exchange (B) illustrates not only that felicitous denial does not require that Speaker A and Speaker B utter sentences that encode *incompatible* truth-conditional content, but moreover that felicitous denial does not even require that the speakers utter sentences that (in the context) encode *any* truth-conditional content.

This particular way of motivating the stronger conclusion assumes a Strawson-inspired view of presupposition failure, which is controversial, but the general point can be supported independently of this assumption.¹³ For there are cases of felicitous denial where neither the target *t* nor the denial *d* is a sentence in the indicative mood, and thus neither utterance is even apt for encoding truth-conditional content. Suppose

¹¹ Sundell does not make this second step explicit, because he defines disagreement as “the relation between speakers that licenses linguistic denial” (2011, 274). For my purposes it is important to keep the distinction between *denial* and *disagreement* clear.

¹² Geurts (1998) presents a categorization of the varieties of denial, several of which support Sundell’s first step.

¹³ Other plausible cases of utterances of declarative sentences that express no truth-conditional content include infelicitous performatives, and problematic uses of vague predicates. Richard (2008) suggests that a clear, albeit somewhat contrived, case is provided by *paradoxical* utterances.

John and Mary are observing a dramatic trial, and just as the judge is about to pass sentence on the accused, the gallery erupts with heartfelt pleas. In such a context, the following exchange might take place:

- (C) John: Punish him!
Mary: No, don't punish him! Set him free!

In exchange (C) John and Mary do not even utter sentences in the indicative mood, and thus their utterances are not even apt for encoding truth-conditional content. Nonetheless, Mary's denial is perfectly felicitous. Thus exchanges such as (B) and (C) demonstrate not only that it is not necessary for felicitous denial that Speaker A and Speaker B utter sentences that semantically encode incompatible truth-conditional content, but moreover it is not even necessary that the speakers utter sentences that semantically encode any truth-conditional content at all.

Let us now turn to Sundell's second step, viz. explaining the nature of the *disagreement* manifested by Mary's felicitous denial in exchange (A). If Mary's denial (A2) is not a *proposition denial* that encodes truth-conditional content that is incompatible with the content of John's target assertion (A1), then what sort of denial is it? Sundell claims that exchanges such as (A) involve a variety of denial that can occur when indexical terms suffer from metasemantic under-determination; i.e. when the context of utterance fails to supply a contextual parameter that is required in order for the utterances to determine complete intensions.¹⁴ Sundell introduces this variety of denial in terms of an example involving the less radically context-sensitive predicate 'is tall'. Following Barker (2002), Sundell maintains that indexical predicates such as 'is tall' allow for *metalinguistic uses*, and Sundell observes that such metalinguistic assertions can be felicitously denied:

Gamma has asked Alphie what counts as tall in this area. Alphie responds by uttering ['Ivan is tall'], referring to Ivan, who is standing in clear sight of all parties to the conversation. It is easy to imagine Betty disagreeing with Alphie and uttering ['Nuh uh. Ivan is not tall']. In fact, she could quite naturally assert that content in the form of a denial of Alphie's utterance. ... (Sundell, 2011, 279).

According to Sundell, Betty's denial of Alphie's assertion does not concern whether or not Ivan's height meets or exceeds a given degree-of-height δ . As Sundell explains, "Alphie and Betty's disagreement cannot be about Ivan's height; after all, Ivan is standing right in front of them. What they disagree about is ... what level of height [ought to be] the salient standard for tallness" (Sundell, 2011, 279).¹⁵ Thus the *disagreement*

¹⁴ Glanzberg (2007) and Stojanovic (2007) also invoke metasemantic under-determination in defense of indexicalism.

¹⁵ Sundell suggests that a context disagreement might also be "a factual dispute over what the context actually is" (Sundell, 2011, 279). This suggestion, however, is problematic. For if δ is already fixed in the

manifested by Betty's denial of Alpie's assertion is what Sundell calls "context disagreement" (Sundell, 2011, 275): Alpie's target assertion pragmatically expresses that he *believes* that the operative degree of height in the context should be such that Ivan's height meets or exceeds it, and Betty's denial pragmatically expresses that she *believes* the operative standard or degree of height in the context should be such that Ivan's height does *not* meet or exceed it. Sundell thus takes the exchange to be an instance of what Lewis (1979) refers to as the process of *accommodation and negotiation*; Alpie and Betty are to be understood as *negotiating* over what the content of 'is tall' is going to be in their conversation. Assuming something like Kennedy and McNally's (2005) semantics for gradeable adjectives, this reduces to a negotiation over what degree-of-height should be operative.

Sundell proposes that exchange in (A) is analogous to the above described exchange involving 'is tall'; as Sundell puts it, his proposal is "to extend the metalinguistic analysis of *tall* disputes to disputes about taste" (Sundell, 2011, 282). There is, however, a significant disanalogy between Alpie and Betty's dispute involving 'is tall', and John and Mary's dispute involving 'is tasty': In the 'is tall' context disagreement, Alpie and Betty are disagreeing over *how tall* someone must be to satisfy (in the context) 'is tall'. But in the 'is tasty' dispute John and Mary are not quibbling over *how tasty* something must be in order for it satisfy 'is tasty'; rather they disagree as to whether or not licorice is tasty *at all*. In the case of a context disagreement involving 'is tasty' then, what the speakers are alleged to be negotiating is not what the operative *degree* should be, but rather what the operative *standard* should be.

There are, however, compelling reasons for doubting that exchanges such as (A) manifest context disagreements over what the operative standard of taste should be. First, PPTs do not even seem to exhibit the requisite radical sort of context sensitivity.¹⁶ Borrowing some terminology from Kaplan (1989) and Recanati (2004), Sundell's proposal is committed to the thesis that the conventional meaning of 'is tasty' is a *character* such that an occurrence of 'is tasty' in a context of utterance *c* encodes a *complete intension* only if this *character* is *saturated* by a standard that is operative in *c*. This thesis implies a straightforward

context, then either Alpie or Betty utters a sentence that encodes a false proposition. But this result would undermine Sundell's ability to account for the *faultless intuition*. (This problem is also noted by Egan, 2014, 82-83.) And here the relevance of the slightly stronger conclusion I took pains to support above is apparent: Since felicitous denial does not require that the utterances semantically encode *any* truth-conditional content, the felicity of Alpie's assertion and Betty's denial does not require that δ be fixed in the context.

¹⁶ For semantic and pragmatic arguments against the radical context-sensitivity of PPTs, see Kölbel (2002), Lasersohn (2005), and MacFarlane (2007, 2014). Collins (2013) presents compelling syntactic arguments against indexicalist analyses of PPTs.

prediction: a competent interpreter who is (knowingly) ignorant of what *standard* is operative for an occurrence of ‘Licorice is very tasty for a sugary candy’ should withhold from assessing that occurrence.¹⁷ The case should be analogous to the case of an interpreter who does not know *who* wrote a contextually isolated inscription of ‘I am female’, and therefore withholds from assessing the inscription. But the cases are not analogous. All you need to consider in assessing an occurrence of ‘Licorice is very tasty for a sugary candy’ are *your own* views with regard to the tastiness of licorice; if you think licorice is tasty, if you think it *tastes good* and you *like* the way it tastes, you will without hesitation accept what the sentence says. And, similarly, if you think that licorice is *not* tasty, if you think it tastes bad and you dislike the taste, you will reject what the sentence says. And, perhaps most significantly, if you are ambivalent with regard to the tastiness of licorice, you will be ambivalent with regard to whether or not you accept or reject what the sentence says.

Sundell might respond that what explains the disanalogy is that when one encounters an isolated token of ‘Licorice is very tasty for a sugary candy’, as a *default option* one supplies one’s own standard, and it is this *personal standard* that becomes operative and saturates the character of ‘is tasty’. This response is in a way appropriate for Sundell, since it implies that *non-isolated* occurrences of ‘is tasty’ – such as the occurrences in exchange (A) – may give rise to *context disagreements* concerning what the operative standard should be. For in such non-isolated cases interpreters will not rely on the default assumption that it is their own personal standards are operative in the context, and thus they will be required to negotiate with the other speakers as to what standard is to be operative. This prediction, however, is not born out: in exchange (A) also, all that is relevant for Mary’s acceptance or rejection of John’s assertion (A2) are *her own* views with regard to the tastiness of licorice.

As a preliminary point, it should be noted that in Sundell’s description of the context disagreement involving ‘is tall’, Sundell stipulates that “Gramma has asked Alphie what counts as tall in this area” (Sundell, 2011, 279). But in typical cases of faultless disagreement involving PPTs no such metalinguistic question has been posed. In determining whether or not exchanges such as (A) are plausibly understood as context

¹⁷ This sentence is not an indexical with regard to *degree of tastiness*, since the degree modifier ‘very’ in effect specifies, or at least constrains, what degree of tastiness something must meet or exceed in order to satisfy the predicate. Similarly, it is not an indexical with regard to *contrast class* (and thus probably not with regard to *type of scale*), since the relevant class is specified by the prepositional phrase ‘for a sugary candy’. And any indexicality attributed to the inflected verb is mitigated by the generic subject ‘licorice’.

disagreements, we must avoid making extraordinary assumptions about the context of utterance and the communicative intentions of the speakers. Thus we should not assume that exchange (A) is preceded by Gramma asking, “What is the standard for tastiness in this area?” Moreover, we should assume that exchange (A) involves what Egan (2010) refers to as *committed* uses of ‘is tasty’, and not what Lasersohn (2007) calls *exocentric* uses: John and Mary must be assumed to be expressing their own opinions, and not attempting to represent the opinions of some third party, such as, say, their finicky child.¹⁸

That the exchange in (A) is not plausibly viewed as manifesting a context disagreement over what standard should be operative is evidenced by considering plausible continuations of the relevant exchanges. In the case of the genuine context disagreement involving Alphie and Betty, given that it is merely a disagreement over how ‘is tall’ is to be used in the conversation, it is open to Alphie to retract his initial assertion, thereby accommodating Betty’s denial, *without changing his mind about Ivan’s height*:

- (D)
- Gramma: (D1) What counts as tall in this area?
 - Alphie: (D2) Ivan is tall.
 - Betty: (D3) No, Ivan’s not *tall*. (D4) He’s only 6’1”.
 - Alphie: (D5) OK, he’s not tall. Whatever.

Because ‘is tall’ requires saturation by a degree-of-height δ that is subject to negotiation and accommodation, Alphie can accept Betty’s denial, and thereby retract his previous assertion, and do so felicitously *even though he has not changed his mind concerning Ivan’s height*. As a consequence, Alphie can accommodate Betty’s denial without *misrepresenting* his opinions concerning Ivan’s height; i.e. in asserting (D5) Alphie is not *lying*.

In contrast, in exchange (A) such painless accommodation is not possible. Given that exchange (A) involves ordinary committed uses of ‘is tasty’, John cannot *felicitously* accommodate Mary’s denial, and thereby retract his initial assertion, without changing his mind with regard to how good licorice tastes. That he cannot felicitously accommodate Mary’s denial in this way is illustrated by the bizarreness of the following continuation of exchange (A):

- (A⁺)
- John: (A1) Licorice is tasty.
 - Mary: (A2) No, Licorice is not *tasty*. (A3) It tastes like medicine.

¹⁸ *Committed uses* give rise to the phenomenon of faultless disagreement; *exocentric* uses do not.

John: (A4) OK, it's not tasty. Whatever. (!?)

Assuming that Mary's denial does not alter John's opinions concerning the tastiness of licorice, John cannot accommodate Mary's denial and *feliculously* assert (A4). If John's opinions concerning the tastiness of licorice remain unchanged, then in asserting (A4) John is *misrepresenting* himself; he is *lying*. This stark disanalogy between (D) and (A⁺) illustrates that exchange (A) is not plausibly understood as a metalinguistic disagreement concerning what tastiness *standard* should be operative in the context. And upon reflection it is not difficult to discern why exchange (A) does not seem to be a mere metalinguistic disagreement. For at least part of the disagreement manifested in exchange (A) concerns differing *evaluative attitudes* toward the taste of licorice; the exchange manifests that John *likes* of the taste of licorice and that Mary does *not like* it. Sundell's analysis of (A) as manifesting a context disagreement ignores this evaluative aspect of the exchange.¹⁹

1.2 MacFarlane's (2014) Relativistic Approach

MacFarlane (2007, 2014) endorses a core principle that underlies Sundell's indexicalism: establishing which degree δ of tastiness is operative (in a context of utterance) does not suffice for the character of 'is tasty' to determine (in that context) a *complete intension*. More specifically, MacFarlane agrees that in the absence of a standard there is no fact of the matter whether or not licorice is above or below any given degree δ . The significant difference between the positions is that where the indexicalist proposes that the requisite standard is a dimension of the *context of utterance* relative to which the *content* of a *character* is determined, the relativist instead maintains that the standard is an aspect of the *circumstances of evaluation* relative to which the *extension* of a *content* is determined. Moreover, according to MacFarlane (2007, 2014) the standard(s) necessary for determining the truth value(s) of the content of an utterance are not selected in *the context of utterance*, but are instead selected in the *contexts of assessment*. As a consequence, the content of John's utterance of 'Licorice is tasty' has no stable truth value; rather it is true relative to some contexts of assessment, and false relative to others. So, for example, in John's context of assessment – the situation in which John assesses the truth value of the sentences uttered by he and Mary – the operative

¹⁹ To be clear, Sundell allows that if “there is a conflict of attitudes, speakers can perceive themselves to be at odds” (2011, 284). But Sundell invokes such “conflict of attitudes” to explain *only* cases where there is no felicitous *denial*; Sundell explains exchanges such as (A) – cases involving felicitous denial – by appeal to the notion of context disagreement.

standard will (plausibly) be such that the content of his utterance is true, and the content of Mary's utterance is false. In Mary's context of assessment – the situation in which Mary assesses the truth value of the contents of her utterance and John's utterance – the operative standard will (plausibly) be such that the content of her utterance is true, and the content of John's utterance is false. And in the contexts of assessment of third parties yet other standards will be operative. This relativization of content-truth to contexts of assessment provides MacFarlane with additional resources for explaining faultless disagreement.

Let us first consider how the additional resources of MacFarlane's assessor relativism can account for the *disagreement intuition*. In the semantic framework of assessor relativism the content of Mary's utterance and the content of John's utterance are such that there is no standard relative to which both are true. Following MacFarlane we can say that such utterance pairs suffer from *preclusion of joint truth*.²⁰ Utterance pairs that suffer from preclusion of joint truth pragmatically express noncotenable mental states: John's assertion pragmatically expresses the belief that licorice is tasty, and Mary's echoic denial pragmatically expresses the belief that licorice is not tasty. These mental state are *content noncotenable* in the sense that there can be no context of assessment relative to which both are true. So, John and Mary's utterances in (A) suffer from *preclusion of joint truth* and thus pragmatically express noncotenable doxastic mental states, and in this way MacFarlane can explain the *disagreement intuition*.

How can the additional resources of assessor relativism explain the faultless intuition? Consider the following exchange:

- (E) Alphie: Ivan is over six feet tall.
Betty: No, Ivan is not over six feet tall.

Alphie and Betty's utterances suffer from *preclusion of joint truth* because the contents of their utterances are incompatible and their truth values do not vary from standard to standard – these contents are not assessor relative. As a consequence, exchange (E) manifests an even stronger sort of disagreement that is not manifested by exchange (A). For note that in exchange (E) the truth of the belief pragmatically expressed by Alphie's utterance relative to Alphie's context of assessment precludes the truth of the belief pragmatically expressed by Betty's utterance relative to Betty's context of assessment. Again echoing MacFarlane, we may say that the utterances in exchange (E) suffer from *preclusion of joint reflexive truth*. The utterances in

²⁰ I have *preclusion of joint truth* in place of MacFarlane's more sophisticated "preclusion of joint accuracy" (MacFarlane, 2014, 125). The distinction between *accuracy* and *truth* is not relevant to my purposes.

exchange (A), however, do not suffer from the *preclusion of joint reflexive truth*. If ‘is tasty’ is assessor relative, then relative to the standard operative in John’s context of assessment the content of the sentence he utters is (probably) true, and relative to the standard operative in Mary’s context of assessment the content of the sentence she utters is also (probably) true. Assessor relativism thus explains how we can view both speakers as faultless, since it allows us to consider the contents of the utterances *as assessed from each speaker’s own context of assessment*.

According to assessor relativism then, there is a sense in which in exchange (A) John and Mary manifest disagreement, because their utterances suffer from preclusion of joint truth. But there is also a sense in which they do not disagree, because their utterances do not suffer from preclusion of joint reflexive truth. Thus assessor relativism would seem to provide a semantic framework in which the seemingly contradictory faultless and disagreement intuitions can be explained. And thus MacFarlane maintains that “the relativist can claim to have found a comfortable middle ground between the objectivist position, which attributes to disputes of taste more robust disagreement than there actually is, and the [indexicalist] position, which does not find enough disagreement” (MacFarlane, 2014, 137).

It is important to appreciate, however, that in order for assessor relativism to explain the *faultless intuition* it must allow that competent interpreters of exchanges such as (A) be cognizant of the assessor-relativity of ‘is tasty’. That is, if we, as competent speakers and interpreters, were not able to consider the contents of John and Mary’s utterances as assessed from John and Mary’s distinct contexts of assessment, then we would not have the intuition of faultlessness; we would not appreciate that in (A) there is no *preclusion of joint reflexive truth*, and thus we would not intuit that the speakers in exchange (A) are faultless in a way that the speakers of exchange (E) are not. On MacFarlane’s view what explains our cognizance of the assessment relativity of ‘is tasty’ is that it is an aspect of the *meaning* of the predicate. The assessment relativity of ‘is tasty’ is clearly articulated in the lexical entry MacFarlane presents for this predicate:

$$\llbracket \text{‘is tasty’} \rrbracket^c_{\langle w, t, g, a \rangle} = \{x \mid x \text{ is-tasty-according-to-}g \text{ at } w \text{ and } t\}$$

(MacFarlane, 2014, 150)

This lexical entry defines the extension of ‘is tasty’ relative to a context of utterance c , and a circumstance of evaluation $\langle w, t, g, a \rangle$ where w is a world, t is a time, g is “gustatory standard” (MacFarlane, 2014, 149), and a is an assignment to variables. (The only elements of circumstances of evaluation we need be concerned

with here are w and g .) In contrast, MacFarlane’s lexical entry for ‘is poisonous’ has no built-in assessor relativity:

$$\llbracket \text{“is poisonous”} \rrbracket_{\langle w, t, g, a \rangle}^c = \{x \mid x \text{ is poisonous at } w \text{ and } t\}$$

(MacFarlane, 2014, 150)

According to MacFarlane then, the assessor relativity of ‘is tasty’ is an aspect of its linguistic meaning; every competent speaker thus knows (perhaps only tacitly) that, as an aspect of the meaning of ‘is tasty’, an utterance of ‘Licorice is tasty’ may *appropriately* be assessed as true or false, depending upon the gustatory standards of the assessor. But this semantic feature of assessor-relativism is problematic for the pragmatic analysis of exchanges such as (A). Given that, as a competent speaker, John would know that whether or not licorice is in the extension of ‘is tasty’ by his standards is wholly independent of whether or not licorice is in the extension of ‘is tasty’ by Mary’s standards, what would the *illocutionary point* of John’s predicating ‘is tasty’ of licorice be? And, what is more problematic, as a competent interpreter, if Mary assumes that John’s utterance (A1) is sincere, then she would have every reason to accept that John’s utterance is true relative to John’s gustatory standards.²¹ Consequently, she would have every reason to believe that her subsequent utterance of (A2), though true relative to her gustatory standards, would be false relative to John’s gustatory standards. Why would Mary bother *denying* John’s utterance if she had every reason to believe that John would *appropriately* assess his utterance as true and *appropriately* assess her denial as false? As MacFarlane puts the challenge, assessor-relativism makes exchanges such as (A) “look like a pretty silly game. Why do we play it?” (2007, 29).

MacFarlane’s response is that “assessment-sensitive expressions are designed ... to foster controversy,” where “the point of using controversy-inducing assessment-sensitive vocabulary is to foster coordination of contexts. We have an interest in sharing standards of taste, senses of humor, and epistemic states with those around us” (2007, 30). MacFarlane is correct that ‘licorice is tasty’ *does* foster such controversy, and moreover, as will become clear in what follows, I fully endorse the idea that the point of exchanges such as (A) is to bring about a sort of *coordination of context*. But what MacFarlane does not explain is *why* uttering sentences that are alleged to be assessment-sensitive *as a matter of their semantics* fosters such coordination of context. If as a matter of semantics ‘Licorice is tasty’ is assessor-relative, and

²¹ Or at least Mary has every reason to believe that John *believes* licorice is tasty according to his gustatory standards.

thus competent speakers know (perhaps tacitly) that it is assessor-sensitive, then why would uttering such a sentence foster controversy? An analogy with spatial-orientation predicates will serve to illustrate the problem. Suppose, as is plausible, sentences containing ‘is on the left’ are assessor-relative in roughly the way that MacFarlane claims sentences containing PPTs are assessor-relative; such predicates determine an extension (at a world) only relative to an *orientation*. Now suppose John and Mary are facing in opposite directions, and John utters ‘the café is on the left’; further suppose that the content of this utterance is true relative to John’s orientation, but false relative to Mary’s. As John and Mary are competent speakers, they *know* that John’s utterance can be true relative to his orientation and false relative to Mary’s. And precisely for this reason John’s utterance will *not* foster controversy between John and Mary. If Mary has every reason to believe that John’s utterance of ‘The café is on the left’ is true relative to John’s orientation, she will not deny John’s utterance on the grounds that it is false relative to her orientation. *Because* Mary knows that the content of John’s utterance is orientation-relative, she has every reason to believe that John’s utterance is true relative to his orientation. And thus her denial of John’s utterance on the grounds that it is false relative to her orientation would indeed be silly.²² Far from being “designed ... to foster controversy,” sentences that are assessor-relative as a matter of their semantics would seem to be designed to *avoid* controversy. Again, it is not difficult to discern what is missing. For at least part of the disagreement manifested in exchange (A), part of what the speakers are trying to *coordinate*, concerns differing *evaluative states* regarding the taste of licorice, but this evaluative aspect of the exchange is also ignored in MacFarlane’s relativist approach.²³

2. A Non-alethic Account of PPTs

Sundell’s (2011) indexicalist approach and MacFarlane’s (2007, 2014) relativist approach face significant problems, and though I have not shown that these problems are insurmountable, I maintain they suffice to motivate the search for an alternative. Moreover these problems are suggestive of a *broadly* expressivist approach that incorporates both *the negative semantic thesis* that utterances of simple sentences

²² Of course Mary would deny John’s utterance if she believed that the café were not to the left *from John’s orientation*. But the analogous situation in the case of ‘is tasty’ would be bizarre: Mary would have to believe that John’s utterance was false according to John’s own gustatory standards. The relativist can allow for such taste-paternalism, but it goes against the spirit of relativism to claim that a denial has an illocutionary point only when the speaker of the denial adopts the standard of the speaker of the target assertion.

²³ MacFarlane (2014, 131) acknowledges that exchanges such as (A) involve the pragmatic expression of noncotenable evaluative states, but he thinks this sort of disagreement is too “flimsy” (2014, 175) to account for the disagreement intuition.

containing PPTs do not encode truth-conditional content,²⁴ and *the positive pragmatic thesis* that the illocutionary point of asserting and denying such sentences is to *pragmatically express* non-doxastic mental states.

We have seen that a common element of both Sundell's indexicalism and MacFarlane's relativism is the view that without supplementation by, or relativization to, a *standard* the meaning of 'is tasty' fails to determine a *complete intension*, a *function* from possible worlds to an extension. Both positions thus hold that *if* such a standard is *not* supplied (by the context of utterance for Sundell, and by the context of assessment for MacFarlane), then an occurrence of 'Licorice is tasty' does not encode a *complete proposition*, does not encode a content that, relative to *only* a world, determines a truth value. Both Sundell and MacFarlane build this standard-dependence into their proposed *semantics* for 'is tasty', though of course they do so in different ways. We have seen, however, that both ways of building this standard-dependence into the *semantics* of PPTs are problematic. These results suggest that PPTs are *not* semantically context-sensitive in the radical ways required by Sundell and MacFarlane; what is suggested is that, as a matter of its semantics, 'is tasty' is no more utterance-or-assessment context-sensitive than, e.g., 'is tall'. But, since it is agreed that *without* supplementation by a *standard* the meaning of 'is tasty' falls short of a *complete intension*, this in turn suggests that occurrences of 'Licorice is tasty' do not, not even when they are assessed, determine *complete propositions*, contents that, relative to *only* a world, determine a truth value. The problems revealed for the semantic aspects of the alethic approaches are thus suggestive of the *negative semantic thesis* that utterances of simple sentences containing PPTs, even relative to a context of assessment, do not semantically encode truth-conditional content.²⁵

Another problem that has been revealed for the alethic approaches is that neither explains the datum that at least part of the disagreement manifested in exchange (A) concerns noncotenable evaluative attitudes that John and Mary bear toward the taste of licorice; exchange (A) clearly manifests that John *likes the taste of licorice* and that Mary *does not like the taste of licorice*. The focus of the alethic approaches is to find a

²⁴ At least they do not semantically encode what I will call *metaphysical* truth conditions.

²⁵ The sort of semantic under-determination I am claiming for PPTs exceeds the sort of semantic under-determination familiar from *relevance theory* (Carston, 2002), and the broader perspective of *truth-conditional pragmatics* (Bach 1994, Recanati, 2010). For I am claiming that for typical utterances of 'licorice is tasty' the entire process of interpretation, including *secondary pragmatic processing*, fails to produce a *complete* proposition.

means for explaining the faultless and disagreement intuitions within the framework of a truth-conditional semantic theory. As a result of this focus, the alethic approaches have ignored the datum that, regardless of what truth-conditional content is or is not semantically encoded in them, John and Mary’s utterances *pragmatically express* noncotenable *evaluative* attitudes. Moreover, in section 1.1 it was established that not only is it not necessary for an utterance *d* to be a felicitous denial of a target utterance *t* that *d* and *t* encode incompatible truth-conditional content, but moreover it is not even necessary that *d* and *t* encode *any* truth-conditional content. These results are in turn suggestive, especially in light of the negative semantic thesis, of *the positive pragmatic thesis*: the primary illocutionary point of John’s utterance (A1) is not to *inform* Mary of some proposition – not even a metalinguistic or relativized proposition. Rather, the primary illocutionary point of John’s utterance is to pragmatically express the evaluative attitude *liking the taste of licorice*. And, correspondingly, the primary illocutionary point of Mary’s felicitous *denial* is to reject John’s utterance on the grounds that the evaluative state it pragmatically expresses is *incorrect*, or at least not shared by Mary.

2.1 The Negative Semantic Thesis

Let us accept the semantic conclusion that is suggested by the critical review of section 1: the *semantics* of PPTs is not significantly different from the semantics of predicates such as ‘is tall’. Thus, following the model of MacFarlane’s (2014) lexical entries (and thus ignoring the *degree* context-sensitivity and the *contrast class context* sensitivity), the lexical entry for ‘is tasty’ is simply,

$$(T) \llbracket \text{“is tasty”} \rrbracket_{\langle w, t, a \rangle} = \{x: x \text{ is tasty at } w \text{ and } t\}$$

Lexical entry (T) is a partial description of what speakers and interpreters know in virtue of knowing the meaning of ‘is tasty’. What about the common and well-motivated view that ‘is tasty’ determines an extension, relative to a world, only if further supplemented by a *mapping* from potentially tasty things to degrees on the tastiness scale? This claim is tantamount to rejection of the *metaphysical* view that the *tastiness* of something (say licorice) *supervenes* on the objective properties of that thing; it is because we reflective speakers think such supervenience fails that the need is felt for supplementation by a *standard*.²⁶

Here is not the place to investigate in detail the claim the *tastiness* of something does not supervene on its *taste*, but perhaps a brief explanation of the failure of such supervenience will bolster my case for the negative semantic thesis. I assume that our *concept* of being tasty is a concept *of* a dispositional response-

²⁶ The rejection of the supervenience claim is equivalent to what Wright (1992, 92) would call a failure to satisfy “cognitive command.”

dependent property: something is tasty *iff* it is disposed to cause, under appropriate circumstances, pleasant gustatory sensations.²⁷ But, as is indicated by lexical entry (T), it is a concept of a nonsubjective property in the sense that the concept does not relativize the disposition to cause (under appropriate circumstances) pleasant gustatory sensations to different experiencers. And thus we could accept that this concept designates an objective property – a property that supervened on taste – only if we assumed that all *experiencers* are similarly disposed to be caused (under appropriate circumstances) to experience pleasant gustatory sensations. But we minimally reflective speakers do not think that all experiencers are similarly disposed in the requisite way; we accept that, even under *appropriate* licorice-involving circumstances, some of us are disposed to experience pleasant gustatory sensations, but others of us are not so disposed. Given that we take the dispositions of *experiencers* to vary in this way, we cannot accept that there is an objective fact of the matter as to whether or not *licorice* is disposed to cause, under appropriate circumstances, pleasant gustatory sensations – we cannot accept that there is an objective fact of the matter as whether or not licorice is tasty. And thus, even if we accept that *the taste* of licorice is the same for all of us, we cannot accept that tastiness supervenes on taste.

The result of combining the simple lexical entry (T) with the plausible metaphysical view that tastiness does not supervene on taste is the thesis that the *semantics* of ‘is tasty’ significantly *under-determines* the extension of an occurrence of ‘is tasty’. To fix ideas, let us compare the PPT ‘is tasty’ with the ordinary predicate ‘is tall’. As was described above, an occurrence of ‘is tall’ determines a *complete intension*. That is, if the context of utterance and/or context of assessment provide a value for each dimension of context sensitivity specified in the *semantics*, then an occurrence of ‘is tall’ *semantically* determines an intension such that, given only a world *w*, the objective facts in *w* suffice to determine an extension. In contrast, an occurrence of ‘is tasty’ does not semantically determine a *complete intension*. Even if the context of utterance and/or context of assessment supplies a value for each dimension of context-sensitivity specified in the semantics, an occurrence of ‘is tasty’ fails to determine an intension such that, given only a world *w*, the objective facts in *w*, which I assume include the *tastes* of things, determine an extension. Let us compliment

²⁷ Since this is a concept of a *dispositional* response-dependent property, it is not a concept of a property with regard to which we take ourselves to be infallible. For relevant discussion see Lewis, (1989), and Egan (2010).

lexical entry (T) with a lexical entry (L) for ‘licorice’ and a semantic rule (S) for generating (characterizations of) the truth conditions of atomic sentences:

$$(L) \llbracket \text{“licorice”} \rrbracket^c_{\langle w, t, a \rangle} = \text{licorice}$$

$$(S) \llbracket \text{“NP}^{\wedge} \text{VP”} \rrbracket^c_{\langle w, t, a \rangle} = \text{True if } \llbracket \text{“NP”} \rrbracket^c_{\langle w, t, a \rangle} \in \llbracket \text{“VP”} \rrbracket^c_{\langle w, t, a \rangle} \\ = \text{False otherwise}$$

Given that an occurrence of ‘is tasty’ fails to determine a *complete* intension, an immediate consequence of these semantic rules is that occurrences of ‘Licorice is tasty’ will fail to *semantically* determine a *complete* proposition, a function from possible worlds to truth values.²⁸

The semantic and metaphysical proposal being developed here provides a way of distinguishing between two senses in which an utterance may be said to have, or lack, truth conditions. Let us distinguish between *metaphysical* and *semantic* conceptions of truth conditions.²⁹ Following Stoljar (1993), we will say that a sentence encodes *metaphysical truth conditions* only if, if true, it is “true in virtue of there being some specific relation between the sentence and a language independent fact, a fact which makes the sentence true” (Stoljar, 1993, 84). Possessing *metaphysical truth conditions* is thus equivalent to encoding a *complete proposition*, since a *complete proposition* is a proposition that, given a world of objective facts, *all by itself* determines a truth value. Thus, *given that tastiness does not supervene on taste*, the above three semantic rules imply that occurrences of ‘Licorice is tasty’ do not encode *metaphysical* truth conditions. It does not follow, however, that competent speakers – speakers who are cognizant of the semantics characterized by the above three semantic rules – have no conception of what would be required for the truth of an utterance of ‘Licorice is tasty’. For, in virtue of knowing these semantic rules, competent speakers and interpreters know that an occurrence of ‘Licorice is tasty’ would be true (in their world) *iff* licorice were in the extension of ‘is

²⁸ It does not follow that occurrences of *all* sentences containing ‘is tasty’ fail to determine a complete proposition. For example, if the semantic rules specified so far are complimented with a suitable rules for indicative conditionals and quantifiers, such as (IC) and (EQ) below, occurrences of ‘If licorice is tasty, then something is tasty’ will be *semantically* determined to be true at every world, even though the antecedent fails to encode a complete proposition.

²⁹ The distinction between *metaphysical* and *semantic* truth conditions is articulated by Leslie (2008, 43-44), and developed by Keller (2014, 21). It is also similar to Sider’s (2012, 114) distinction between *metaphysical* and *nonmetaphysical semantics*. Stoljar (1993) draws a similar, if not equivalent, distinction between *inflationary* and *deflationary* truth conditions. I have eschewed Stoljar’s terminology, as it incorrectly suggests that the deflationary notion of *truth conditions* requires a deflationary theory of *truth*. (That a deflationary theory of truth is not necessary for drawing the distinction is noted by Sinnott-Armstrong 2000, 682.)

tasty' (in their world). Thus their *semantic competence* with regard to an occurrence of 'licorice is tasty' is analogous to their *semantic competence* with regard to, e.g., 'Ivan is tall'. Let us say that occurrences of sentences that do not encode complete propositions, but which nonetheless are such that the semantic rules characterize the conditions under which they would be true, encode mere *semantic* truth conditions. Thus on the view proposed here, though 'Licorice is tasty' does not encode *metaphysical* truth conditions, it does nonetheless encode *semantic* truth conditions.

The non-alethic view I am developing here is *broadly* expressivist, and the so-called Frege-Geach objection presents an infamous challenge for expressivism. The original objection, as formulated by Geach (1960, 1965), was that emotivists such as Ayer (1936) conflated issues concerning what sort of *speech act* one performs when uttering a simple moral sentence with issues concerning what *semantic content* is encoded in such sentences. Geach illustrated the problem in terms of a *modus ponens* argument that involved a moral predicate. Here is an analogous argument involving a PPT:

- (P1) Licorice is tasty.
- (P2) If licorice is tasty, something is tasty.
- So,
- (C) Something is tasty.

Suppose that the expressivist's view is that (P1) does not encode any truth conditions at all, but instead *only* pragmatically expresses a non-cognitive state, e.g. *approving of the taste of licorice*. The problem is that 'licorice is tasty' as it appears in the antecedent of (P2) cannot be such that its contribution to the entire conditional is the *pragmatic expression of approving of the taste of licorice*; for how could the intuitive *truth* of (P2) be explained if an utterance of the antecedent merely *pragmatically expressed* this non-cognitive state? The expressivist might propose that 'licorice is tasty' when it is embedded in a conditional, as in (P2), *does* encode a truth-apt meaning, yet does *not* when it appears on its own, as in (P1). But if 'licorice is tasty' has one meaning in (P1), and another meaning in (P2), then the argument equivocates, and is therefore invalid. But the argument is clearly valid. The basic problem is that though the sort of expressivism we are supposing is a plausible view of *simple* occurrences of 'licorice is tasty', as in (P1), it is not clear how it can be extended to explain the meaning of more complex sentences containing 'licorice is tasty', as in (P2). Thus MacFarlane summarizes the Frege-Geach objection as establishing that a desideratum for a satisfactory account of the meaning of 'tasty' is that it "explain the contribution 'tasty' makes, not just to simple sentences, but to all of the sentences in which it can occur" (MacFarlane, 2014, 21).

One way for expressivism to attempt to satisfy MacFarlane’s desideratum is to formulate an account according to which the meaning of ‘licorice is tasty’ as it appears in both (P1) and (P2) is characterized in terms of the pragmatic expression of mental states, and then to explain how this expressive meaning contributes to the expressive meaning of the conditional in (P2), and moreover the expressive meanings of all other complex sentences in which it can occur. This strategy requires a program of “assertability semantics” (Schroeder, 2008, 32) whereby the meanings of all *atomic* sentences are to be explained in terms of the *pragmatic expression* of mental states, and the meaning of *complex sentences* are explained in terms of more complex attitudes that are compositionally determined by the meanings of their component sentences. The notion of *validity* is then to be understood in a non-propositional way, via the development of *logic for attitudes*.³⁰ This is *not* the way I propose to respond to the Frege-Geach objection. On the non-alethic approach being developed here, ‘licorice is tasty’ is, in a sense, *truth-apt* because it encodes *semantic truth conditions*. The semantics for this sentence is provided by a truth-conditional semantic theory that includes (something like) semantic rules (T), (L) and (S). Competent speakers and interpreters thus know that (P1) is true just in case licorice is in the extension of ‘is tasty’. The same rules apply to ‘is tasty’ as it appears in (P2), so there is no threat of equivocation.

To account for an interpreter’s understanding of (P2), rules for the indicative conditional and the quantifier-phrase ‘something’ must be formulated. But nothing extraordinary is required. A familiar and plausible candidate for the rule for the indicative conditional is

$$(IC) \quad \begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{“If } S_1, S_2 \text{”} \rrbracket_{\langle w, t, a \rangle}^c &= \textit{True} \textit{ if, where } w' \textit{ is the closest world to } w \textit{ such that } \llbracket \text{“} S_1 \text{”} \rrbracket_{\langle w', t, a \rangle}^c = \textit{true}, \\ &\quad \llbracket \text{“} S_2 \text{”} \rrbracket_{\langle w', t, a \rangle}^c = \textit{true}, \\ &= \textit{False} \textit{ otherwise} \end{aligned}$$

And a plausible (simplified) rule for the quantifier phrase ‘something’ is

$$(EQ) \quad \begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{“Something } x: x VP \text{”} \rrbracket_{\langle w, t, a \rangle}^c &= \textit{True} \textit{ if there is an assignment function } a' \textit{ which differs from } a \\ &\quad \textit{at most in what it assigns to 'x', and } \llbracket \text{“} x VP \text{”} \rrbracket_{\langle w, t, a' \rangle}^c = \textit{true}, \\ &= \textit{False} \textit{ otherwise} \end{aligned}$$

Given these semantic rules, there is no particular mystery as to how competent interpreters are able to interpret the premises and conclusion of the argument; moreover, the *validity* of the argument, as well as the

³⁰ See for example Blackburn (1984, 1988), Gibbard (1990, 2003), Richard (2008), and Schroeder (2008).

intuitive truth of (P2), is also readily explained.³¹ On the non-alethic view being developed here the semantics for ‘is tasty’ parallels the semantics for ‘is tall’, and thus there is no more (and no less) a challenge to explain the semantic contribution ‘is tasty’ makes to all of the sentences in which it can occur than there is to explain the contribution ‘is tall’ makes to all of the sentences in which it can occur. This is not to deny that there is an important difference between ‘is tasty’ and ‘is tall’; even relative to an appropriate context, the former encodes only an incomplete intension, whereas the latter encodes, relative to an appropriate context, a complete intension. But this difference concerns the *metaphysical* fact that the *tallness* of something supervenes on its *objective height*, whereas the *tastiness* of something does not supervene on its *objective taste*.

2.2 The Positive Pragmatic Thesis

As characterized by semantic rules (L), (T), and (S), competent speakers and interpreters know that an occurrence of ‘Licorice is tasty’ is true *iff* licorice satisfies ‘is tasty’. But reflective speakers and interpreters also know that the meaning of ‘is tasty’ under-determines its extension – reflective speakers and interpreters are cognizant of the fact that the predicate has an *incomplete* intension, and thus they also know that there is no fact of the matter as to what is tasty. Does it follow that reflective speakers have no opinions as to what is and is not tasty? Clearly even reflective speakers have such opinions, and they do not hesitate to pragmatically express them by using ‘is tasty’ to make assertions. But assertions using ‘is tasty’ differ from assertions using, e.g., ‘is tall’, because PPTs are a variety of what Williams (1985) calls “thick terms.” PPTs are *thick* in the sense that, beyond whatever truth-conditionally relevant content they may or may not encode, their use is conventionally associated with the expression of an evaluative mental state. I do not think it is controversial that PPTs are thick in this way, but perhaps sketching an explanation of why PPTs are thick in this way will bolster my case for the positive pragmatic thesis.

The so-called *thickness* of PPTs is, I suggest, explained by an *a priori* connection between the nature of the concepts associated with such terms and corresponding evaluative mental states.³² I proposed above that the concept associated with ‘is tasty’ is a concept of a dispositional, response-dependent, property:

³¹ If (P1) is *assumed* to be true in the actual world, then we are assuming that w' (the closest world wherein licorice is in the extension of ‘tasty’) is the actual world. So, *assuming* (P2), by (IC) it follows that ‘Something is tasty’ is true relative to the actual world also. Moreover, (EQ) and (IC) together explain the intuitive truth of (P2).

³² Even MacFarlane grants that “there is an analytic connection between one’s tastes and what flavors one *likes*” (2014, 144).

roughly, something is tasty *iff* it is disposed to cause, under appropriate circumstances, pleasant gustatory sensations in experiencers. It follows that *licorice* is tasty only if *experiencers* are disposed, under appropriate circumstances, to be caused *by licorice* to have pleasant gustatory sensations – the licorice and the experiencers are *reciprocal dispositional partners*. But for an *experiencer* to have such a reciprocal disposition, is, at least to a first approximation, *what it is* for the experiencer to instantiate an evaluative mental state: roughly, to be disposed, under appropriate licorice-involving circumstances, to experience pleasant gustatory sensations just is to *like the taste of licorice*. I suggest that it is this conceptual connection between the dispositional, response-dependent, concepts associated with PPTs and reciprocal evaluative mental states that explains why an assertion of ‘Licorice is tasty’ pragmatically expresses not only the doxastic state of *believing that licorice is tasty*, but moreover the evaluative state of *liking the taste of licorice*. Given that the speaker and licorice are reciprocal disposition partners of the relevant sort, the *licorice* can be *tasty* only if *the speaker likes the taste of licorice*. Assertions of ‘licorice is tasty’, in virtue of being *assertions*, pragmatically express the doxastic state *believing that licorice is tasty*. But in virtue of the conceptual connection between *licorice being tasty* and *liking the taste of licorice*, such assertions thereby also pragmatically express the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*.³³

As was noted in section 1, at least part of what is going on in exchange (A) is that John and Mary are pragmatically expressing noncotenable evaluative states concerning the taste of licorice. The *a priori* connection between the concepts associated with ‘is tasty’ and the evaluative state *liking the taste* suggests a strategy for explaining how the pragmatic expression of these evaluate states occurs. In asserting ‘licorice is tasty’ one does pragmatically express a belief, but the illocutionary point of making the assertion is not adequately explained in terms of the pragmatic expression of this belief. For the content of the belief that licorice is tasty is neither determined to be true nor determined to be false by the objective facts of the actual world, and as reflective speakers and interpreters we are aware of this – what is or is not tasty is, as we say, merely a matter of opinion.³⁴ Given our awareness of the incompleteness of such content then, the illocutionary point of assertions of ‘Licorice is tasty’ cannot be that of *informing* an interpreter of an objective

³³ Though I do not have space to explore them here, there are significant analogies between my claim that assertions of ‘Licorice is tasty’ pragmatically express the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*, and Egan’s (2010) claim that such assertions semantically encode *de se* content, roughly, $\lambda x.x$ *likes the taste of licorice*.

³⁴ In the spirit of Blackburn (1988), we could call beliefs with such incomplete contents *quasi-beliefs*.

fact; even if Mary generally takes John's beliefs to be reliable indicators of how things *are*, John's pragmatic expression of his belief that licorice is tasty provides her with no such indication. But, I propose, the illocutionary point of John's utterance can be accurately characterized as the pragmatic expression of the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*. The illocutionary point of John's assertion of 'Licorice is tasty' is not concerned with the *contextual coordination* of John and Mary's doxastic states representing how things *are* – not even with how they are relative to some standard. Rather the illocutionary point of John's assertion of 'Licorice is tasty' is concerned with the contextual coordination of John and Mary's evaluative states concerning how the taste of licorice is to be evaluated.

Let us adopt an amended version of Stalnaker's (1978, 2002) theory of conversation.³⁵ A conversation takes place against a background of intentional states mutually assumed to be shared by the participants; I will refer to this set of intentional states as the *common ground*. The common ground contains as subsets the *doxastic-set*, and the *evaluative-set*.³⁶ These are, respectively, the set of doxastic states and evaluative states that are mutually assumed to be shared by the participants. A conversation is then understood as a process whereby the participants amend the common ground by performing speech acts such as *asserting, denying, questioning, answering, commanding, correcting, explaining*, etc. Philosophers who theorize about conversations have focused on the act of *assertion* and the effects of assertions on the doxastic states in the common ground. For example, an assertion of 'Obama was born in Africa', because it contains no thick terms, pragmatically expresses merely the doxastic state *believing that Obama was born in Africa*. As a consequence, the illocutionary effect of using this sentence to make an assertion is merely to *update* the doxastic-set by adding this doxastic state to it. In contrast, because it contains the thick predicate 'is tasty', an assertion of 'Licorice is tasty' pragmatically expresses not only the doxastic state *believing that licorice is tasty*, but moreover the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*. As a consequence, the illocutionary effect of using this sentence to make an assertion is to *update* the doxastic-set by adding *believing that licorice is tasty* to it, and *also* to update the evaluative-set by adding the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice* to it.

³⁵ Egan (2010, 2014) also invokes a Stalnaker-inspired framework to account for faultless disagreement, though Egan overlooks the need to distinguish the speech act of *assertion*, which *updates* the common ground, with the speech of act *denial*, which *downdates* the common ground. Note that an *assertion* of $\sim S$ immediately following an assertion of S will be infelicitous; the context-set resulting from the second assertion would be \emptyset .

³⁶ The common ground also includes the *practical-set*, the set of practical states (desires, wishes, etc.) that are assumed to be shared by the participants, but I will ignore the practical-set here.

Of the two updates, the one involving the evaluative-set is more significant, as the content of the added belief is not a complete proposition.

What about Mary's denial? In section 1.1 it was established that in order for an utterance *d* to be a felicitous *denial* of a previous utterance *t* it is not necessary that *d* and *t* encode incompatible truth-conditional content, nor even that *d* and *t* semantically encode *any* truth-conditional content. Thus the negative semantic thesis that John's utterance (A1) and Mary's utterance (A2) encode only *semantic* truth conditions is wholly compatible with Mary's denial of John's assertion being a felicitous speech act. But if both John's utterance and Mary's utterance do not encode metaphysical truth conditions, and as reflective speakers John and Mary are cognizant of this, then what is the *illocutionary point* of Mary's denial of John's assertion? The illocutionary point of denial generally is to *correct* the update triggered by the target assertion, a process known as *downdate*. This correction involves, first, *undoing* the update triggered by the target assertion, and then, second, amending the common ground in an alternative way.³⁷ Thus Mary's echoic denial of John's assertion first *undoes* the update triggered by John's assertion, and then it amends the resulting common ground in an alternative way; more specifically Mary's denial first removes *liking the taste of licorice* from the evaluative-set, and then adds to the resulting evaluative-set the evaluative state *not liking the taste of licorice*, where this negative evaluative state is equivalent to the disjunctive evaluative state *disliking the taste of licorice* or *being decidedly-indifferent toward the taste of licorice*.³⁸

Why does Mary's denial trigger the addition of *not liking the taste of licorice* to the evaluative-set? In particular, why does Mary's denial pragmatically express the evaluative-state *not liking the taste of licorice*, and not merely that Mary holds *no* evaluative attitude toward licorice? A denial is felicitous only if the speaker of the denial instantiates mental states that are noncotenable with the mental states pragmatically expressed by the target assertion. The target of Mary's denial, viz. John's assertion of 'Licorice is tasty', pragmatically expresses both *believing that licorice is tasty* and the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*. Thus, if Mary's denial is felicitous, she must instantiate a mental state that is noncotenable with either the doxastic state *believing that licorice is tasty* or the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*. If Mary neither believed that licorice is tasty, nor that it is *not* tasty, then Mary would not instantiate a doxastic state that is

³⁷ This dynamic analysis of denial is originally due to Van der Sandt (1993).

³⁸ To be *decidedly indifferent* toward the taste of licorice is to have decided that licorice is neither good tasting nor bad tasting; the evaluative state of *decided indifference* regarding something is thus distinct from not having made up one's mind about it.

noncotenable with *believing that licorice is tasty*. Moreover, if she had no beliefs concerning the tastiness of licorice, she would have *no* evaluative attitudes toward licorice. And if she instantiated no evaluative attitudes toward licorice, she would not instantiate an evaluative state that is noncotenable with *liking the taste of licorice*. Therefore, the felicity of Mary’s denial requires that she instantiate either the doxastic state *believing that licorice is not tasty*, or that she take herself to instantiate the evaluative state *not liking the taste of licorice* (i.e. *disliking the taste of licorice* or *being decidedly indifferent toward the taste of licorice*). But, as explained above, there is an *a priori* connection between *licorice being tasty* and *liking the taste of licorice*, and as consequence of this connection, Mary believes that licorice is not tasty if and only if she takes herself to *not like the taste of licorice*. It is for this reason that Mary’s denial triggers adding *not liking the taste of licorice* to the evaluate-set.

Finally, what about Mary’s utterance of (A3), the so-called “follow-up” of her denial? The illocutionary purpose of the follow-up is to justify the denial by explaining why the target assertion, if accepted, would update the common ground in a way that that would result in its being incompatible with the denier’s (e.g. Mary’s) intentional states. Thus the illocutionary point of Mary’s subsequent utterance of (A3) ‘It tastes like medicine’ is to provide a *reason* for her denial of John’s assertion. So, the primary illocutionary point of Mary’s utterance of ‘it tastes like medicine’ is to add *believing that licorice tastes like medicine* to the doxastic-set, and thereby provide a reason for *not* adding *liking the taste of licorice* to the evaluative-set. The felicity of such follow-ups illustrates that even though the primary illocutionary point of assertions and denials of simple sentences containing PPTs is to pragmatically express evaluative states, such assertions and denials can nonetheless be supported or undermined by *reasons*.³⁹ Of course John may not accept Mary’s follow-up as providing a *good* reason for rejecting the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice* – perhaps John *likes the taste of medicine*. But he will nonetheless recognize the illocutionary point of the follow-up as presenting such a reason.

2.3 A Formal Model of Non-Alethic Denial

In the previous section I developed the positive pragmatic thesis by informally presenting a dynamic model of conversation in which the common ground is taken to include both *doxastic states* and *evaluative states*, and assertions and denials are understood as triggering additions and subtractions of both sorts of

³⁹ The expressivist theories of Hare (1952), Stevenson (1960), Gibbard (1990, 2003), and Richard (2008) all recognize that evaluative states can be supported and undermined by reasons.

intentional states. In this section I will develop a simple formalization of what has thus far been only informally characterized. The formalization presented here is based upon van der Sandt's (1993) formalization of *assertion* and *denial*, but it goes beyond van der Sandt's formalization in that it augments the procedures of *update* and *downdate* to incorporate not only doxastic states and alethic content, but also evaluative states and non-alethic content.

Van der Sandt's (1993) formalization of the doxastic aspects of assertion and denial construes *update* and *downdate* not as adding and removing *mental states* themselves from the common ground, but rather as adding and removing the *contents* of those states, where such contents are construed as sets of possible worlds.⁴⁰ Thus, in order to extend van der Sandt's formalization to include evaluative aspects of assertion and denial, we must first find a kind of set-theoretic entity that can serve as the content of an evaluative state in the way that a set of possible worlds serves as the content of a doxastic state. Where p is a complete proposition, each possible world either makes *true* or makes *false* the *belief that p* (and no possible world makes any such belief both true *and* false). Because possible worlds play this truth-value-fixing role for beliefs, the content of a belief can be taken to be the set of worlds in which the belief is *true*. What is needed is a kind of entity – call it an *evaluative world* – such that for every evaluative state E , relative to any evaluative world, E is either *correct* or *incorrect* (and no evaluative world makes any evaluative state both correct *and* incorrect). Let it be granted that an *evaluative state* will involve an attitude of either *liking*, *disliking*, or *being decidedly-indifferent toward* some entity x , where x may be anything one is capable of holding such attitudes towards, e.g. sunsets, the taste of licorice, going to the dentist, etc. Let us define an *evaluative world* as a triple $\langle l, d, i \rangle$ where l is the set of things that it is correct to *like*, d is the set of things that it is correct to *dislike*, and i is the set of things toward which it is correct to be *decidedly-indifferent*. (Not every such triple can be allowed as an evaluative world. Just as we do not allow, e.g., possible worlds in which Obama was born in Africa *and* not born in Africa, so we do not allow evaluative worlds in which, e.g., licorice is to be liked *and* to be disliked.) Finally, let us require that every evaluative world $\langle l, d, i \rangle$ is such

⁴⁰ Stalnaker identifies the common ground with the set of possible worlds compatible with what is *presupposed* by the participants; van der Sandt refers to this as the *world set*. The world set is thus identical to the *intersection* of the *contents* of all the mutually shared doxastic states. If the common ground is construed as the world set, update can be construed as the *intersection* of sets of possible worlds. Construing the *common ground* as such a set of worlds, however, complicates the definition of *downdate*, which is intuitively conceived of as the *removing* of propositions from the common ground. To preserve the intuitive conception, I follow van der Sandt in identifying the common ground with *sets of individuated contents*.

that every evaluative state is either correct or incorrect (and not both) relative to $\langle l, d, i \rangle$. Thus, e.g., the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice* is *correct* relative to the evaluable world $\langle l, d, i \rangle$ just in case *the taste of licorice* is a member of l , and otherwise it is *incorrect*. The content of an evaluative state such as *liking the taste of licorice* can now be modeled by a set of evaluable worlds analogously to the way the content of a doxastic state is modeled by a set of possible worlds: just as the content of *believing that Obama was born in Africa* is $\{w: \text{in } w \text{ Obama was born in Africa}\}$, so the content of *liking the taste of licorice* is $\{\langle l, d, i \rangle: \text{licorice} \in l\}$; similarly, just as the content of *believing that Obama was not born in Africa* is $\{w: \text{in } w \text{ Obama was not born in Africa}\}$, so *not liking the taste of licorice* is $\{\langle l, d, i \rangle: \text{licorice} \notin l\}$.

Let us conceive of a conversation as an ordered sequence of utterances $\langle u_1 \dots u_n \rangle$, where each n is a *point* in the conversation. We identify the *common ground* c_n at any point n as $\langle D(c_n), E(c_n) \rangle$; $D(c_n)$ is a set of sets of possible worlds, where each such set of possible worlds is the content of a mutually shared doxastic state at n , and $E(c_n)$ is a set of sets of evaluable worlds $\langle l, d, i \rangle$, where each such set is the content of a mutually shared evaluative state at n . (Note that $D(c_n)$ will include the contents of beliefs pertaining to features of the context of utterance relevant for determining the contents of indexicals; e.g. $D(c_n)$ will include beliefs pertaining to who the speaker is, where the speaker is located, the time of utterance, etc. It will also include beliefs pertaining to the previous utterances in the conversation.) Let ϕ_n be an utterance of sentence ϕ at point n . Our task is define *update* $\uparrow(\phi_n, c_n)$ and *downdate* $\downarrow(\phi_n, c_n)$ resulting in common grounds c_{n+1} brought about by utterances of ϕ_n (assertions) and $\neg\phi_{n+1}$ (echoic denials of assertions). So, let us first define the more familiar update and downdate for $D(c_n)$, which I will formalize as $\uparrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n))$ and $\downarrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n))$, respectively. And then we will amend these definitions to define update and downdate for $E(c_n)$, which I will formalize as $\uparrow'(\phi_n, E(c_n))$ and $\downarrow'(\phi_n, E(c_n))$, respectively. And then finally, we will combine $\uparrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n))$ and $\uparrow'(\phi_n, E(c_n))$ to define $\uparrow(\phi_n, c_n)$, and combine $\downarrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n))$ and $\downarrow'(\phi_n, E(c_n))$ to define $\downarrow(\phi_n, c_n)$.

Let ϕ_{cn} be an utterance of sentence ϕ relative to common ground c_n . An utterance ϕ_{cn} amends the common ground c_n not only in virtue of its encoded semantic content (if there is such content), but also in virtue of all the information the utterance *pragmatically expresses*. Let us suppose that all the doxastic states that are pragmatically expressed by ϕ_n are expressed in virtue of either the encoded semantic content of ϕ_n , the

presuppositions of ϕ_n , or the *implicatures* of ϕ_n .⁴¹ Let $[\phi]_{cn}^D$ be the set of possible worlds semantically encoded by ϕ_{cn} (if ϕ_{cn} semantically encodes a set of possible worlds), and let $PRES^D(\phi, c_n)$ and $IMP^D(\phi, c_n)$ be the sets of doxastic contents pragmatically expressed by ϕ_{cn} in virtue of its presuppositions and implicatures, respectively. We may then define the *doxastic information content* of an utterance ϕ_n as follows:

$$DIC(\phi_n) =_{def} \{[\phi]_{cn}^D\} \cup PRES^D(\phi, c_n) \cup IMP^D(\phi, c_n)$$

(Note that $DIC(\phi_n)$ is a set of *propositions*, a set of sets of possible worlds.) *The update* of a doxastic-set of a common ground brought about by an assertion ϕ_n can now be straightforwardly defined in terms of $DIC(\phi_n)$:

$$\uparrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n)) =_{def} D(c_n) \cup DIC(\phi_n)$$

This definition of doxastic update captures the intuitive idea that *assertions* amend the common ground by *adding* information, in particular, by *adding* to what is mutually believed.

To capture the intuitive idea that the *denial* of a target assertion *removes* what the assertion *added*, we must be able to specify what the target assertion added. And note that this may not be identical to the *information content* of the target assertion, since the target assertion may have communicated redundant information, i.e. information that was already in the common ground. Thus in order to define $\downarrow'(\phi_n, D(c_n))$ we must first define the *doxastic communicative content* of an utterance as the doxastic information content of the utterance, *minus* the information that was already in $D(c_n)$:

$$DCC(\phi_n) =_{def} DIC(\phi_n) \setminus D(c_n)$$

That is, the doxastic communicated content of an utterance is all the doxastic content it conveys, *minus* the doxastic content that is already in the *doxastic-set* of the common ground.

The instances of *denial* in paradigmatic instances of faultless disagreement are *echoic denials*, and thus, following van der Sandt (1991), they can be accounted for in terms of an *echo-operator*. Let $*(\phi_n)$ be an utterance that *echoes* target utterance ϕ_{n-1} . The intuitive idea is that the doxastic information content of an echoic utterance is identical to the doxastic information content of its target utterance:

$$DIC(*(\phi_n)) = DIC(\phi_{n-1})$$

⁴¹ This is a simplification. For example, John's assertion pragmatically expresses the belief that John has asserted that licorice is tasty, but the content of this belief is neither the semantic content of John's utterance, nor an *implicature* nor *presupposition* of the utterance.

For technical reasons however, van der Sandt needs $IC(*\phi_n)$ to be a set that contains just *one* proposition (so that it can be negated) as opposed to a set containing many propositions. So this definition is refined as follows: suppose $*(\phi_n)$ echoes (ϕ_{n-1}) , and $DIC(\phi_{n-1}) = \{p^1, p^2, \dots p^n\}$. Then

$$DIC(*(\phi_n)) = \{p^1 \cap p^2 \cap \dots p^n\}$$

Let $\neg^*(\phi)_n$ be an *echoic denial* uttered at point n of a previous target assertion ϕ_{n-1} . We may now define the *downdate* of the doxastic set of a common ground brought about by a denial $\neg^*(\phi)_n$ of a target assertion ϕ_n as follows:

$$\downarrow(\neg^*(\phi)_n, D(c_n)) =_{def} D(c_n) \setminus DCC(\phi_{n-1}) \cup DIC(\phi_n)$$

Intuitively, the denial of an assertion results in the doxastic communicated content of the target being removed from the common ground, thus in effect returning the common ground to its condition before the target assertion was made, and then adding the information content of the negative sentence of the echoic denial to the amended common ground.⁴²

The definitions for $\uparrow(\phi_n, E(c_n))$ and $\downarrow(\phi_n, E(c_n))$ are analogous to those for $\uparrow(\phi_n, D(c_n))$ and $\downarrow(\phi_n, D(c_n))$. Let us define the *evaluative information content* of ϕ_n , $EIC(\phi_n)$, as the set of all evaluative contents (sets of evaluable worlds) of all the evaluative states pragmatically expressed by a use of ϕ in c_n . Such evaluative states, we are supposing, may be pragmatically expressed by ϕ_n in virtue of the content it semantically encodes, $[\phi]_{c_n}^E$, in virtue of its presuppositions $PRES^E(\phi, c_n)$ or in virtue of its implicatures $IMP^E(\phi, c_n)$. Thus we may then define the *evaluative information content* of an utterance ϕ_n as follows:

$$EIC(\phi_n) =_{def} \{[\phi]_{c_n}^E\} \cup PRES^E(\phi, c_n) \cup IMP^E(\phi, c_n)$$

(Note, again, that $EIC(\phi_n)$ is a set of contents; in this case a set of sets of *evaluable worlds*.) *Update* for the evaluative set $E(c_n)$ is then defined as follows:

$$\uparrow(\phi_n, E(c_n)) =_{def} E(c_n) \cup EIC(\phi_n)$$

The *evaluative communicative content* of an utterance will be the evaluative information content of the utterance, minus the evaluative information that is already in the common ground:

⁴² Again, this is a simplification. Mary's denial of John's assertion does not remove *all* the communicated content of John's assertion from the common ground. For example, it does not remove the content *that John has asserted that licorice is tasty*. It would be more accurate to say that a denial removes all the communicated content of the target assertion that is logically independent of the assertion's having been made.

$$\text{ECC}(\phi_n) =_{\text{def}} \text{EIC}(\phi_n) \setminus \text{E}(c_n)$$

And we may now define the *downdate* of the evaluative set of a common ground brought about by a denial $\neg^*(\phi)_n$ of a target assertion ϕ_n as follows:

$$\downarrow'(\neg^*(\phi)_n, \text{E}(c_n)) =_{\text{def}} \text{E}(c_n) \setminus \text{ECC}(\phi_{n-1}) \cup \text{EIC}(\phi_n)$$

Intuitively, a denial of a target assertion results in the evaluative communicated content being removed from the common ground, and then adding to it the evaluative content of the echoic denial, i.e. the evaluative content of the evaluative states pragmatically expressed by the echoic denial.

All that remains is to combine the definitions of $\uparrow'(\phi_n, \text{D}(c_n))$ and $\uparrow'(\phi_n, \text{E}(c_n))$ to obtain a definition of $\uparrow(\phi_n, c_n)$, and to combine the definitions of $\downarrow'(\neg^*(\phi)_n, \text{D}(c_n))$ and $\downarrow'(\neg^*(\phi)_n, \text{E}(c_n))$ to obtain a definition of $\downarrow(\phi_n, c_n)$. So, as we have,

$$\uparrow'(\phi_n, \text{D}(c_n)) =_{\text{def}} \text{D}(c_n) \cup \text{DIC}(\phi_n)$$

$$\uparrow'(\phi_n, \text{E}(c_n)) =_{\text{def}} \text{E}(c_n) \cup \text{EIC}(\phi_n)$$

And we combine them to obtain

$$\uparrow(\phi_n, c_n) =_{\text{def}} \langle \text{D}(c_n) \cup \text{DIC}(\phi_n), \text{E}(c_n) \cup \text{EIC}(\phi_n) \rangle$$

We also have

$$\downarrow'(\neg^*(\phi)_n, \text{D}(c_n)) =_{\text{def}} \text{D}(c_n) \setminus \text{DCC}(\phi_{n-1}) \cup \text{DIC}(\phi_n)$$

$$\downarrow'(\neg^*(\phi)_n, \text{E}(c_n)) =_{\text{def}} \text{E}(c_n) \setminus \text{ECC}(\phi_{n-1}) \cup \text{EIC}(\phi_n)$$

And we combine them to obtain

$$\downarrow(\phi_n, c_n) =_{\text{def}} \langle \text{D}(c_n) \setminus \text{DCC}(\phi_{n-1}) \cup \text{DIC}(\phi_n), \text{E}(c_n) \setminus \text{ECC}(\phi_{n-1}) \cup \text{EIC}(\phi_n) \rangle$$

For the sake of illustration, let us apply this formal model to exchange (A). The common ground c_I at the point of John's assertion is $\langle \text{D}(c_I), \text{E}(c_I) \rangle$, which represents the sets of mutually shared doxastic and evaluative states prior to John's assertion. John's assertion then triggers the *update* of c_I ,

$\uparrow(\text{Licorice is tasty}_I, c_I)$. Via $\uparrow'(\text{Licorice is tasty}_I, \text{D}(c_I))$ all of the assertion's *doxastic information content* is added to $\text{D}(c_I)$, and, via $\uparrow'(\text{Licorice is tasty}_I, \text{E}(c_n))$ all of the assertion's *evaluative information content* is added to $\text{E}(c_I)$. Thus, since the content of *liking the taste of licorice* is an aspect of the assertion's evaluative information content, $\{ \langle l, d, i \rangle : \text{licorice} \in l \}$ is added to $\text{E}(c_I)$. No content is added to $\text{D}(c_I)$ in virtue of what is semantically encoded in the sentence John utters, since there is no such content; i.e. $\llbracket \text{Licorice is tasty} \rrbracket_{c_I}^D$

refers to nothing, because the meaning of ‘Licorice is tasty’, even taken relative to c_1 , fails to determine a set of possible worlds. Thus the result of John’s utterance is $\langle D(c_2), E(c_2) \rangle$, where $E(c_2)$ includes $\{ \langle l, d, i \rangle : \text{licorice} \in l \}$, and this is the common ground that is *downdated* by Mary’s denial, $\downarrow(\text{Licorice is not tasty}_2, c_2)$. Via $\downarrow(*\text{Licorice is not tasty}_2, D(c_2))$ all of *doxastic communicated content* that was added to $D(c_1)$ as a result of John’s assertion is removed, and, then all the *doxastic information content* of $\text{Licorice is not tasty}_{c_2}$ is added to the resulting set. And via $\downarrow(*\text{Licorice is not tasty}_2, E(c_2))$ all of *evaluative communicated content* that was added to $E(c_1)$ as a result of John’s assertion is removed, and then all the *evaluative information content* of $\text{Licorice is not tasty}_{c_2}$ is added to the resulting set. Thus Mary’s denial removes $\{ \langle l, d, i \rangle : \text{licorice} \in l \}$ from $E(c_2)$, and since the content of *not liking the taste of licorice* is an aspect of the denial’s *evaluative information content*, $\{ \langle l, d, i \rangle : \text{licorice} \notin l \}$ is added to the resulting evaluative-set. And again no content is added to $D(c_2)$ in virtue of what is semantically encoded in the sentence Mary utters, since there is no such content; i.e. ‘ $[\text{Licorice is not tasty}]^{P_{c_2}}$ ’ refers to nothing, because the meaning of ‘Licorice is not tasty’, even taken relative to c_2 , fails to determine a set of possible worlds. In this dynamic formal process which models exchange (A), no content is added to or removed from $D(c_n)$ in virtue of what is *semantically encoded* in the sentences uttered by John and Mary. This result further justifies and explains the positive pragmatic thesis that the *illocutionary point* of asserting simple sentences containing PPTs is to pragmatically express non-doxastic mental states.

3. A Non-Alethic Approach to Faultless Disagreement

It remains to explain how the non-alethic approach accounts for the phenomenon of faultless disagreement. The *faultless intuition* is readily explained by our cognizance of the metaphysical fact that, in terms of exchange (A), tastiness does not supervene on taste, and as a consequence utterances of simple sentences containing PPTs do not (even when a *degree* and contrast class is established in the context) determine *complete intensions*. This is what minimally reflective speakers and interpreters are getting at when they say that questions about what is or is not tasty are *merely subjective*, or *merely matters of opinion*. Such cognizance, however, is wholly compatible with a hearer either *agreeing* or *disagreeing* with the mental states pragmatically expressed by John’s assertion. In asserting ‘Licorice is tasty’ John is pragmatically expressing *believing that licorice is tasty*, and – in virtue of the conceptual connection between the concepts associated with PPTs and evaluative mental states – he is also pragmatically expressing the evaluative state

liking the taste of licorice. If we interpreters take ourselves to also instantiate these mental states, then we take ourselves to agree with John regarding them; if we interpreters take ourselves to instantiate noncotenable mental states, then we take ourselves to disagree with John regarding them. But, given our cognizance of the metaphysical fact that the tastiness of licorice does not supervene on the taste of licorice, such agreement or disagreement does not warrant a judgment that John speaks *truly* and Mary speaks *falsely*. If we adopt the technical use of *correct* and *incorrect* proposed in section 2.3, then, we can, however, say that we *are* warranted in judging that John pragmatically expresses a *correct* or *incorrect* attitude toward the taste of licorice.⁴³

These observations concerning *our* agreement or disagreement with the attitudes pragmatically expressed by John and Mary point the way toward an explanation of the *disagreement intuition*, the judgment that exchanges such as (A) manifest a disagreement between the speakers. John's assertion pragmatically expresses that he instantiates the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*, and Mary's subsequent denial pragmatically expresses that she instantiates the noncotenable evaluative state *not liking the taste of licorice*. These evaluative states are *noncotenable*, and thus by pragmatically expressing them John and Mary make manifest that they disagree with regard to *liking the taste of licorice*. (The noncotenability of these evaluative states is reflected in their incompatible contents: $\{ \langle l, d, i \rangle: \text{licorice} \in l \} \cap \{ \langle l, d, i \rangle: \text{licorice} \notin l \} = \emptyset$.)

Though this disagreement regarding *liking the taste of licorice* is the most significant disagreement manifested in exchange (A), the non-alethic account allows us to recognize manifested disagreements that concern intentional states directed toward particular details of the conversation in which John and Mary are engaged. For example, the non-alethic approach allows us to recognize that the exchange manifests that Mary disagrees with John with regard to *wanting to add liking the taste of licorice to the evaluative-set*. This disagreement concerns noncotenable attitudes pertaining to aspects of John and Mary's conversation. (Given the technical terms just used to characterize this conversation-dependent disagreement, ordinary speakers would not recognize the characterization as correct, but that is to be expected.) That such conversation-dependent disagreements are relevant to the explanation of the *disagreement intuition* is evidenced by the datum that the disagreement intuition is less prevalent in instances of faultless disagreement involving two

⁴³ Does it follow that I think that people who claim that assertions of 'Licorice is tasty' are *true* (or *false*) are *confused*? No. All that follows is that I am using 'is true' and 'is false' more precisely.

speakers in different conversations. If in one conversation John asserts ‘Licorice is tasty’ and in a distinct conversation Mary *asserts* ‘Licorice is not tasty’, we intuit that a disagreement is manifested, but the intuition of disagreement is weaker than it is in cases, such as exchange (A), where one person *denies* the assertion of another. This variance is explained by the fact that conversation-dependent disagreements will be manifest whenever one speaker denies the assertion of another speaker, but will not be manifest in cases involving two speakers in distinct conversations.

The non-alethic approach to faultless disagreement presented here raises many questions, but here I will address only two. First, why is

(A1) Licorice is tasty.

a device for performing the illocutionary act of updating the evaluation-set? Why not simply use

(A1*) I like the taste of licorice.

to perform this act? The reason is that utterances of (A1*), unlike utterances of (A1), encode metaphysical truth conditions; the content of an utterance of (A1*) is true *iff* its speaker instantiates the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice*. And thus (A1*) is used to assert this truth-conditional content, *i.e.* to add *believing that speaker likes the taste of licorice* to the doxastic-set, *without* adding *liking the taste of licorice* to the evaluative-set. That is, a competent interpreter can understand an assertive use of (A1*) as merely *the report* of the speaker’s evaluative state, and thus he can accept the assertion without updating the common ground by adding *liking the taste of licorice* to the evaluative-set. In contrast, because (A1) contains the thick term ‘tasty’, an assertive use of it pragmatically expresses the evaluative state *liking the taste of licorice* – the illocutionary point of such a use is to add this evaluative state to the evaluative-set.

A second, related, question, is this: What is the pragmatic expression of evaluative states *for*? The role of doxastic states, and their importance in our sharing them, is clear enough. But what purpose is served by updating the evaluative-set of a conversation by adding an evaluative-state such as *liking the taste of licorice*? The answer has to do with the fact that, as MacFalane (2007) observes, conversations are not only exchanges of information, but are also opportunities to coordinate practical cooperative action. Such cooperative action requires not only a shared background of doxastic states, but also a shared background of evaluative states. For without a shared background of evaluative states, there is no guarantee of shared goals and purposes and without shared goals and purposes cooperative interaction – including of course

conversation itself – is impossible. Faultless disagreements are not *theoretical* disputes concerning what the facts *are*, but rather are disputes concerning how things are to be *evaluated*. Even after all the objective facts, including what licorice tastes like, have been settled, there remains the question of whether or not licorice is tasty. And, as Gibbard might put it, “we need language to discuss such questions, language with all the power and flexibility of language that is clearly descriptive – but with its tie to what to [like] built in” (2003, 13). There is, however, a significant difference between *how* Gibbard builds in non-alethic content and how I build in such content. Gibbard *replaces* truth-conditional semantics with expressivist semantics, whereas the non-alethic approach developed here *supplements* truth-conditional semantics with an expressivist *pragmatics*.*

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