An extension of the relativist parameter

Abstract. Relativist semantics has in the past typically been invoked to account for a limited range of constructions involving purportedly ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions. In fact, sensitivity to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, fruitfully tracked by a relativist intensional parameter, are ubiquitous throughout the compositional semantics. This work extends the relativist program by incorporating its semantic innovations more deeply into the grammar, showing its tools to be applicable to a wide range of lexical material, including material not usually thought to be within their scope. This is done through a reexamination of the truth conditions of belief reports, which track the idiosyncratic conditions under which agents assess for truth, and not just their descriptive or factual commitments. An expansion of the use of the relativist parameter is provided and integrated with the prior program, and suggestions are made as to how to treat linguistic subjectivity as a general grammaticized phenomenon.

1 Introduction: relativism expanded

The goal of this paper is to offer an extension of relativist semantics to a wider range of linguistic phenomena than the theory has hitherto been used to treat, and in so doing to offer a broader picture of how that semantics ought to be used to think about linguistic subjectivity as a general grammaticized phenomenon.

By ‘relativist semantics,’ I mean the program in semantics and pragmatics put forward by a loose coalition of authors whose views and formal proposals, despite their diversity, do in my estimation converge on certain core theses. Of these theses, two are key for present purposes. First, the compositional semantics of natural language requires extensions to be evaluated relative to a non-classical intensional parameter. Second, there are conventional principles governing the way an agent is to assess intensional contents that vary on this parameter for truth, and the values set for this parameter by the assessor conventionally track certain features of the circumstances that the assessor occupies. The result is that (i) there are truth-apt semantic objects, roughly playing the role that propositions play in a classical semantics, which vary in their truth value relative to this novel parameter, and (ii) distinct assessors (or the same assessor in distinct circumstances) may be conventionally

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1Some important foundational works in relativist semantics include Köbel (2002), MacFarlane (2003), Richard (2004), Egan et al. (2005), Lasersohn (2005), and Stephenson (2007a). More fully-elaborated statements and defenses of the program can be found in MacFarlane (2014) and Lasersohn (2017). Köbel (2011) is an advanced textbook on the topic that can serve as an introduction to its core concerns and formal tools.
obliged to assess the very same such objects differently as true or false, depending on how the circumstances that they occupy during assessment differ.

In the past, relativist semantics has mostly been employed to account for the behavior of a fairly limited subset of constructions that involve certain ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions. The purpose of the present exercise is to show that this limitation is unwarranted, and that in fact a huge amount of linguistic material, much of which has never been thought to be included in this limited subset, is sensitive to idiosyncratic differences in truth assessment among assessors, and that this feature of their interpretation must be visible to the compositional semantics. The formal tools that relativists have introduced, along with the picture of linguistic subjectivity that they have offered, can be fruitfully extended to these cases, resulting in a picture on which the function of the relativist parameter is deeply ingrained in the compositional semantics, and linguistic subjectivity – in the sense of semantic sensitivity to idiosyncrasies in truth assessment – is a generally grammaticized phenomenon.

This is accomplished by way of reexamining the truth conditions of belief reports that use the English verb think.² The truth of these reports require that an agent assess the content of their embedded clause as true, which is the same as to say that they require the agent to believe that content. It will be demonstrated that the truth conditions of these reports are sensitive not just to agents’ descriptive commitments (i.e., how they take the world to be), but also to the way agents idiosyncratically assesses contents for truth, which is not exhausted by their ‘factual’ commitments. In order to capture the semantics of belief reports, we therefore require an intensional parameter that tracks these idiosyncratic and not necessarily descriptive commitments, and the relativist parameter is well-suited to the job. Furthermore, the domain in which the use of the parameter is fruitful is not limited to a special restricted class of linguistic material, suggesting that an appeal to the parameter is ubiquitous throughout the language.

Having demonstrated the way the use of the parameter is to be extended, I return to the question of how to fold this newly proposed use into the relativist project more broadly, and the question of how linguistic subjectivity as a semantic phenomenon ought to be treated. I distinguish between two kinds of grammaticized subjectivity: ‘weak subjectivity’ involves mere sensitivity to the relativist parameter, without any further grammatical principles governing how the value assigned to that parameter is to be resolved, while ‘strong subjectivity’ couples a sensitivity to the parameter with principles obliging assessors to set values for the parameter that track features of their own circumstances. The later sort of subjectivity is what relativists have primarily been concerned with until now, but I argue that the two are united in the compositional semantics, and that both ought to be treated using the relativist framework.

²I use think as the exemplar of a verb of belief, rather than believe, as the latter introduces additional complications not relevant to the points made here. Believe has an indirective flavor, dispreferring complement clauses learned by the agent through direct observation (cf. Stephenson 2007b: §5.2); it allows an argument place for source of information (as in, Alphonse {“thinks / believes} Bethany that Secretariat is an athlete); and it is gradable in a way that think is not (as in, Alphonse {“I thinks / believes} strongly that Secretariat is an athlete). I do believe that the same points could ultimately be made using believe just as well, but as I take the issues in this footnote to be orthogonal to the present work, the neutral think serves as the less distracting choice.
The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 makes the relevant observations about belief reports, demonstrating that their truth conditions are sensitive not just to the descriptive commitments of the relevant agent, but also to the idiosyncratic ways in which that agent assesses for truth. Section 3 then briefly demonstrates that the traditional non-relativist intensional semantics of belief reports is unable to account for these observations. Section 4 then shows how the relativists’ additional parameter of evaluation – which following much previous work I term the ‘perspective’ of evaluation – can be invoked to provide an appropriate semantics for belief reports, providing the basics of the extension of the use of the parameter argued for here.

The second portion of the paper is dedicated to refining the resulting picture, and integrating it into the relativist program and into the compositional semantics more generally. Section 5 offers two refinements to the basic picture introduced in the previous section. Section 6 then integrates this use of the perspective of evaluation with its previous use by relativists to account for the semantics of ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions of various kinds, and draws the distinction between strong and weak subjectivity. Section 7 then argues that linguistic subjectivity is a unified phenomenon in the compositional semantics, tracked by the presence of a unique perspective parameter. Section 8 offers some concluding comments on how one ought to think about subjectivity as a grammaticized phenomenon using the relativist framework.

2 Some observations about belief reports

There is a ubiquitous feature of belief reports that the standard semantics of those reports fails to capture. The truth conditions of a belief report do not merely track the believing agent’s descriptive commitments as to how the world is. They additionally track the descriptive circumstances under which the agent is idiosyncratically disposed to take the content of the embedded clause to be true. An example of a report using think can help illustrate: consider (1).

(1) Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.

Secretariat is (was) a racehorse, a Virginia Thoroughbred that in the early 1970s won a number of races and was granted a number of awards, and who became the Triple Crown Champion in 1973. He is therefore, in some sense, an exemplary athlete – he took part officially in competitions of bodily prowess with great skill, a purpose to which his life was largely devoted.

But as some authors have pointed out (cf. Ludlow 2008: 118, Sundell 2011: §3.4, Plunkett & Sundell 2013, Ludlow 2014, Plunkett & Sundell 2021), there is variation among the English-speaking population as to how to treat the descriptive application of the noun athlete, and this variation is crucial in deciding whether Secretariat is an athlete. That is, in

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3The example of Secretariat was first introduced to the literature in Ludlow (2008: 118). Ludlow references an argument on sports talk radio, during which callers on a show took objection to the listing of Secretariat on a list of great athletes. The list in question is apparently from the December 27, 1999 issue of Sports Illustrated, in an article titled ‘The Master List: The 50 greatest sports figures from each of the 50 states,’ in which Secretariat was listed in third place for Virginia. The title of the article itself doesn’t use
deciding whether Secretariat is an athlete, agents vary not just on how they take the world to be, but also vary in whether they take the meaning of *athlete* to be applicable to Secretariat, even given what descriptive commitments they have about him. The most obvious non-descriptive issue to resolve in deciding whether Secretariat specifically is an athlete is whether the meaning of *athlete* is applicable to nonhuman competitors like racehorses or not.\(^4\)

To decide whether Secretariat is an athlete therefore requires two converging commitments on the part of the agent who decides this, and so believes or doesn’t believe that Secretariat is an athlete. First, the agent has to decide how the world is, with respect to the states of affairs relevant to Secretariat’s being an athlete or not, and second, the agent has to decide whether these states of affairs are of the right sort to make Secretariat an athlete. This double commitment is reflected in the truth conditions of an attitude report like (1): it attributes to the agent belief in the content of the complement clause, which is to say that the agent takes this content to be true, which is to say that the agent has decided both these issues, such that they take Secretariat to be some way, and that they take this fact to mean that he is an athlete.

In short, (1) reports that, given the sorts of individuals Alphonse takes to be athletes, he takes the world to be such that Secretariat is one of those individuals. If, for instance, he takes any competitor in a bodily competition to be an athlete, and takes Secretariat to be such a competitor, then (1) is true; if he takes only human competitors to be athletes, but still takes Secretariat to be such a competitor in the exact same way, then (1) is false. And so the report tells us not just about his descriptive commitments, but also about the conditions under which he is willing to assess the content of the complement clause as true, which in this case hinges on the descriptive conditions under which he takes the meaning of *athlete* to apply.

To coin a somewhat hefty phrase, we can say that agents in general, including Alphonse, have in addition to their descriptive commitments a set of ‘idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment.’ These are dispositional commitments to assess the contents of truth-apt clauses in certain ways, depending on how the agent takes the world to be. They are idiosyncratic, in that they may vary across the speaker population, and the grammar countenances this fact in the semantics of belief reports, attributing commitments to agents relative to their the word *athlete*, and since the I don’t have access to the actual audio of the original show, and don’t know its exact date (this took place on ‘Mike and the Mad Dog,’ on WFAN Sports Radio, 101.9 FM), it’s an open question as far as I know whether the real-life dispute centered explicitly around the application of *athlete*. Regardless, the application of *athlete* to racehorses is indeed, from my own informal surveys, something that English speakers are in complete disarray about, showing all sorts of idiosyncrasies in their judgments.

\(^4\)Two points here: first, there are a number of other matters an agent might have to take a stand on, in deciding whether an individual is an athlete. For instance, the agent might have to decide whether athletes have to take part in competitions, whether those competitions have to be in some official capacity, whether athletes have to have some sort of physical prowess, and whether they have to be dedicated to cultivating that prowess, as opposed to competing as a fluke. A canonical athlete has all of these properties, while a canonical non-athlete has none, but there is room for variation among the speaker population as to what counts as an athlete in the middle cases. Second, the issue with Secretariat is probably not ultimately about whether athletes must be human *per se*, but rather about whether being an athlete requires the sort of knowledge and agency that a human has (to understand the import of a competition, to prepare for and engage in it knowingly, etc.). Nevertheless, being human serves as a useful proxy for these other issues, and so this is what’s discussed in the text.
own idiosyncratic patterns. That a report like (1) does not merely attribute a descriptive commitment to an agent, but attributes to that agent an idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment as well, can be illustrated in three related ways, all of which get at the same phenomenon from different angles.

The first way is to note that in evaluating (1), it is not possible to say whether the attitude report is true or false, given Alphonse’s descriptive commitments alone. Make his descriptive commitments as rich as you like, and still in order to evaluate (1) for truth, something else must be specified, i.e. what sorts of individuals Alphonse takes to ‘count’ as athletes. Even given an arbitrarily rich specification of what Alphonse thinks about the world, still (1) might be either true or false, and what’s needed to decide the case is precisely this extra information about Alphonse’s patterns of truth assessment that the report attributes to him.

The second way is to note that Alphonse can change his belief as to whether Secretariat is an athlete, even without changing any of his descriptive commitments. Thus, if Alphonse is fully knowledgable about Secretariat, and takes him to be a racehorse and so on, he might at one time think that Secretariat is an athlete, so that (1) is true, and at another time, on deciding that nonhuman competitors can’t be athletes, not think that Secretariat is an athlete, so that (another utterance of) (1) is false. In changing his mind about whether Secretariat is an athlete, Alphonse need not change his mind about any of the relevant ‘facts’ surrounding Secretariat. He can simply change his non-descriptive ‘opinion’ on the matter, by changing which sorts of individuals he takes to be athletes.

The above two considerations prompt the question: what exactly do Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment amount to here, if they are not governed by his descriptive commitments? Just what is it about Alphonse that decides, in the first illustration, whether he thinks that Secretariat is an athlete or not? And just what is it in the second illustration that changes about him, if his beliefs about Secretariat are to change, without any change in descriptive commitments?

For now it suffices to note that in such cases, Alphonse’s beliefs are tracked by certain linguistic dispositions he has. Holding constant his descriptive commitments about Secretariat (so that he takes Secretariat to be a racehorse, and so on), whether he thinks that Secretariat is an athlete roughly corresponds to whether he is ingenuously willing to call Secretariat an athlete, that is, whether he is disposed to ingenuously apply predicates meaning ‘athlete’ (including athlete itself, along with any synonyms in English or any other language) to individuals that have properties like Secretariat in his speech act behavior. And so if he thinks that Secretariat is an athlete, then he is willing, other things equal, to ingenuously assert that Secretariat is an athlete, to refuse to deny or retract this, to draw appropriate inferences that follow from this truth commitment (e.g., if athletes must be granted certain rights, and Secretariat is an athlete, then it follows that Secretariat must be granted those rights), and so on.

In fact, in this case it’s not clear what if anything Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment amount to, in a grammatical sense (that is, in a sense tracked strictly by the truth conditions of the belief report), other than a commitment to these linguistic dispositions on top of his descriptive commitments. This does not mean that Alphonse’s belief as to whether Secretariat is an athlete is otherwise inconsequential in such cases: a lot of non-linguistic matters may be implicated in one’s speech act behavior. For instance, holding a belief in this way may be extra-grammatically associated with certain non-doxastic
attitudes or social positions, and so commitment to such beliefs may signal commitment to those attitudes or positions. Such truth assessments may also be consequential to the agent’s actions, insofar as the relevant beliefs occupy a space in a web of other truth commitments: as the syllogism in the previous paragraph shows, believing that Secretariat is an athlete may affect the way one is committed to acting towards him. We’ll return to the grammatically ‘merely linguistic’ nature of such belief in Section 6.

The third way to illustrate this extra commitment enforced by belief reports is to note that two belief reports can attribute the same belief to two distinct individuals, and even when these reports are evaluated at the same world, they can attribute different descriptive commitments to those agents, depending on how their idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment differ. For instance, suppose that we attribute the same belief attributed to Alphonse above to Bethany, as in (2).

(2) Bethany thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.

If both Alphonse and Bethany take the same sorts of individuals to count as athletes, e.g. if they take all competitors, human or not, to be athletes, then (1) and (2) attribute the same descriptive commitments to their respective agents: they require that Alphonse and Bethany both take Secretariat to be such a competitor. But if instead, Bethany takes only human competitors to be athletes, then (2) attributes to her a different descriptive commitment – for it to be true, Bethany must take Secretariat to be a human competitor. That is, because Bethany’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment are different from Alphonse’s, what she takes to count as an athlete is different, and so what descriptive commitments are attributed to her differ as a result, too. If we’re talking about a world like the actual world, where Secretariat is a nonhuman competitor, then (1) will attribute no descriptive error to Alphonse, but will attribute a descriptive error to Bethany (since in this case, she mistakenly thinks that Secretariat is human).

Likewise, if Alphonse takes all competitors to be athletes, while Bethany takes only humans to count as athletes, then it might be that Alphonse and Bethany differ in their beliefs about Secretariat according to the truth conditions of the relevant belief reports, despite having the same descriptive commitments about Secretariat – in this case, Bethany has a different non-descriptive ‘opinion’ on the matter than Alphonse, which is tracked by what sort of individuals she takes to be athletes. Suppose, for instance, we report Bethany’s beliefs as in (3).

(3) Bethany thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete.

Both (1) and (3) can be true at a world in which Alphonse and Bethany believe all the same factual things about Secretariat, but Alphonse takes nonhuman competitors to count as athletes, while Bethany takes only humans to count as athletes. In such a world, Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete, while Bethany thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete, and their beliefs differ only because of their differing idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, and not for any difference in descriptive commitments between them.

A misalignment of idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment can also create the possibility of ‘descriptively faultless disagreement,’ in the sense that: (i) two agents can hold beliefs at the same world that are doxastically non-cotenable, in that no one agent could hold both
beliefs simultaneously without having descriptively incoherent commitments as to how the world is; and (ii) nonetheless, these non-cotenable beliefs, when held by distinct agents at the same world, may commit neither of them to a descriptive error, which is to say that neither agent takes the world to be some way that it’s not in virtue of holding these beliefs.\(^5\)

This is what happens in the above-described scenario, so long as Secretariat is a nonhuman competitor, and both Alphonse and Bethany rightly take this to be so. Then Alphonse thinks that he’s an athlete, while Bethany thinks that he’s not, but neither is mistaken about the ‘factual’ properties that Secretariat possesses. This is despite the fact that no one agent could think that Secretariat both is and is not an athlete without descriptive incoherence, i.e. without taking the world to be some way it couldn’t be.

Before moving on from these observations, there are two points worth making. The first point is that the interpretations of these attitude reports are not due to any special ‘subjectivity’ or ‘evaluativity’ of the embedded predicate. Or at least, if the effect can be traced somehow to the evaluative nature of *athlete*, then some similar criterion would need to be invoked for the vast majority of predicates in natural language, which show similar effects with belief reports, regardless of whether they have been traditionally considered ‘evaluative’ or not. Indeed, with almost any predicate one might care to pick, the corresponding embedded predications show the same effect, anchoring the interpretation of the belief report to the agent’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, which becomes relevant to the truth conditions of the report precisely where speakers are licensed to assess in distinct idiosyncratic ways – that is, where it is not decided by the grammar alone whether the predicate in question is to apply, given the agent’s descriptive commitments.

Here are four sample scenarios, chosen more or less at random, to exemplify the point that pairs of attitude reports like (1) and (3) can be constructed for any number of predicates in the complement clause, none of which are typical examples of ‘subjective’ or ‘evaluative’ expressions. In each scenario, the difference in attitudes reported between Alphonse and Bethany hinges only on the differences in their idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, as both of them are presumed to be apprised of all descriptive information relevant to forming their beliefs. Nevertheless, their beliefs differ, due to the difference in their willingness to take the content of the complement clause to be true, given their descriptive commitments.

(4) **Scenario 1 (pizza):**

Alphonse and Bethany eat at a deep dish pizza place in Chicago. Bethany wonders

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\(^5\) The notion of faultless disagreement, in the sense of Kölbl (2004), is in a bit of a theoretical and polemical mess at the moment in the literature. While it has historically motivated arguments for a relativist semantics, even MacFarlane (2014: 136) has said, “If one does not want to be misunderstood, it is best to avoid the phrase ‘faultless disagreement’ entirely.” There are of course many possible senses of faultlessness, and many possible senses of disagreement, which makes the notion something of a moving target (cf. Cappelen & Huvenes 2018 for discussion and references). For this reason, I isolate just one very specific notion of faultless disagreement, in order to make the relevant points about belief reports here. Descriptively faultless disagreement is similar to, but not quite the same as, MacFarlane’s (2014: 133 ff.) ‘faultless\(_a\) disagreement\(_n\),’ and I take it to be one of the crucial notions relativists have typically been concerned with. What it amounts to is spelled out in the illustrations in the coming sections, where its representation is shown to be formally unobjectionable. While I realize there is wiggle room here in how to interpret the observations in the text, I take the existence of such descriptively faultless disagreement, tracked by attitude reports, to be a kind of pre-theoretical observation about how these reports function, which any acceptable theory of their truth conditions would have to capture.
why anyone would take their food, which looks to her like some sort of lasagna, to be pizza, while Alphonse is happy to call what they’re eating pizza. Pointing to their food, we might report their beliefs as follows.

a. Alphonse thinks that this is pizza.
b. Bethany thinks that this isn’t pizza.

(5) **Scenario 2** *(destroy)*:
Alphonse and Bethany watch the Dodgers play the Braves in Los Angeles. For several innings, it’s 1-2 with the Braves in the lead, until in the bottom of the ninth inning, the Dodgers hit a three-run home run, so that the Dodgers win 4-2. Alphonse takes this to be a blowout, while Bethany takes the Dodgers to have barely eked out the win. We might report their assessments of the game as follows.

a. Alphonse thinks that the Dodgers destroyed the Braves.
b. Bethany thinks that the Dodgers didn’t destroy the Braves.

(6) **Scenario 3** *(wooden)*:
Alphonse is moving out of his apartment, and sends a notice to the other people in his building that he has a wooden desk to give away. Bethany is interested and comes to check it out, only to discover that the desk Alphonse is talking about is made of particle board. Alphonse insists that it’s a wooden desk (knowing that it’s made of particle board), while Bethany says that his notice was misleading. We might report their disagreement as follows.

a. Alphonse thinks that the desk is wooden.
b. Bethany thinks that the desk isn’t wooden.

(7) **Scenario 4** *(in the class)*:
Alphonse is teaching a class on polysynthesis in Amazonia, and he promises his students that he’ll read carefully the first draft of a paper for everyone in the class. Gamela is not officially registered for the course, but has been sitting in on it since the beginning, and doing all the work, and she submits a draft to Alphonse. Alphonse asks Bethany whether he’s committed to looking over Gamela’s draft, saying that he thinks he should, because she counts as being in the class. Bethany disagrees, and says she’s not. A report of their beliefs:

a. Alphonse thinks that Gamela is in the class.
b. Bethany thinks that Gamela isn’t in the class.

There is no apparent semantic class represented by the predicates in these examples, and for good measure, a noun, verb, adjective, and prepositional phrase have also been chosen, to show that the effect doesn’t target a syntactic class. It thus appears that belief reports in general track the conditions under which their agents take the meanings of predicates to apply, and not just those agents’ descriptive commitments. This sensitivity to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in the compositional semantics is thus a deeply-ingrained and widespread feature of lexical content generally.\(^6\)

\(^6\)I say ‘lexical content’ here, because I find plausible the idea that this sensitivity to speakers’ idiosyncratic
The second point involves a clarification of what exactly the nature of the claim made in this section is. The claim is not simply that the classical intensional meanings of predicates like *athlete* are underdetermined in the lexicon, or that metalinguistic variation or dispute in the application of such predicates occurs within or across speakers, or any such thing. Such claims may very well be true, but they don’t get at the crucial point raised by these attitude reports, which is that however one glosses the relevant non-descriptive speaker variation in truth assessment, the compositional semantics is systematically sensitive to that variation in the intensional environments of belief reports.

That is, verbs of belief and their embedded clauses track the way speakers vary idiosyncratically in their patterns of truth assessment, so that this fact must be visible to the compositional semantics, and not merely a matter of how meanings assigned to predicates in the lexicon are underdetermined, or how speakers might differ in how they assign such meanings to begin with, etc. The point is that the stable truth conditions of these reports track these differences in idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns, even where all the expressions involved are given a fixed meaning: sensitivity to this variation is part of their settled compositional meaning in these environments. Regardless of how one idiosyncratically applies the meaning of *athlete*, (1) must be read as anchored to Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of assessment, and this fact is invariant across speakers, and unaffected by the way *athlete* may or may not receive different interpretations from the one who evaluates the report for truth.

Note also that this claim is not about standards for the application of predicates in conversational contexts, or any such thing. The attitude reports here attribute descriptive and non-descriptive commitments to agents stably across contexts, whether or not the agent of the report is taking part in any conversation (although as noted earlier, some of these idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment may still have a ‘merely linguistic’ flavor, for reasons I return to in Section 6). The features of the truth conditions of attitude reports noted here are context-insensitive: one must read them as anchored to the agent’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in this way, no matter the context in which they’re uttered.

### 3 The problem with the classical semantics

The observations in Section 2 cannot be captured by a classical, non-relativist intensional semantics of attitude reports. To illustrate, if one adopts a denotation for *think* that makes use of doxastic alternatives in the vein of Hintikka (1969), it follows that an attitude report places a fixed descriptive commitment on the subject, which cannot vary depending on that subject’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment. Given such a classical denotation as in (8), and an ordinary denotation of the predicate *athlete* as in (9), the truth conditions of patterns of truth assessment often does not appear with functional material in embedded clauses of belief reports. For example, I cannot hear *Bethany thinks that Secretariat isn’t an athlete* as being sensitive to Bethany’s idiosyncratic treatment of the non-past tense, or of negation, except perhaps in quite marginal circumstances. I also leave open the possibility that some lexical material does not introduce this sensitivity either, again except perhaps marginally, though this is a difficult question, and there are likely systematic reasons why some lexical items introduce this sensitivity more freely than others. I return briefly to the question of where and how sensitivity to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment is introduced compositionally, by either lexical or functional material, in the conclusion in Section 8.
Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete are as in (10), assuming that Alphonse denotes \(a\), Secretariat denotes \(s\), and the remaining functional material is vacuous.

\[
(8) \quad \text{[ \text{think} ]}_w^x = \lambda \phi_{st}. \lambda x. e. \forall w' \in \text{Dox}_{x,w}[\phi(w')]
\]

\[
(9) \quad \text{[athlete] }_w^x = \lambda x. \text{athlete}'(w)(x)
\]

\[
(10) \quad \text{[Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete] }_w^x
= [\text{think} ]_w^x(\lambda w'.[\text{athlete} ]_w^x([\text{Secretariat} ]_w^x))(\text{[Alphonse] }_w^x)
= \forall w' \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{athlete}'(w')(s)]
\]

As usual, we take \(\text{Dox}_{x,w}\) to be the set of worlds that are compatible with how \(x\) takes the world to be in \(w\): this set thus represents \(x\)’s combined descriptive commitments in \(w\). \(\text{athlete}'\) is then a function from worlds to individuals to truth values, taking a world \(w\) and individual \(x\) to true just in case \(x\) has the relevant property in \(w\) – the property of being an athlete, whatever that is. The result in (10) thus places a certain descriptive commitment on Alphonse, and whether he thinks Secretariat is an athlete according to the report depends solely on the commitments he has about the way the world is.

We can now return to the three related facts pointed out in Section 2, about how Alphonse can assess the content of \textit{Secretariat is an athlete} for truth, and see how this treatment fails to capture them. First, according to (10), Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment over and above his descriptive commitments are irrelevant to the truth conditions of the attitude report, which only track the latter, and so we need not know anything about such patterns to know whether the report is true. Second, according to this treatment, Alphonse is unable to change his belief regarding whether Secretariat is an athlete by adopting a new idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment, without changing his mind about any worldly properties concerning Secretariat. And third, it is not possible according to this treatment for two distinct agents with the same descriptive commitments about Secretariat to differ in their beliefs about whether he is an athlete.

To make this last point clear, note that the descriptive commitment that Bethany takes on in believing that Secretariat is an athlete must be identical to the one that Alphonse takes on. Since this descriptive commitment is all the attitude report tracks, no non-descriptive difference in her attitude can alter what the attitude report commits her to.

\[
(11) \quad \text{[Bethany thinks that Secretariat is an athlete] }_w^x
= \forall w' \in \text{Dox}_{b,w}[\text{athlete}'(w')(s)]
\]

From the above it also follows that if Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete, and Bethany thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete, then the two cannot descriptively faultlessly disagree on the matter: one of them must make a descriptive error in holding the relevant belief. On the present semantics, the truth values of the relevant attitude reports are as in (12), assuming a standard extensional semantics for negation.

\[
(12) \quad \text{a. } \forall w' \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{athlete}'(w')(s)]
\]

\[
\text{b. } \forall w' \in \text{Dox}_{b,w}[\neg \text{athlete}'(w')(s)]
\]

If both (12a) and (12b) are true, since there is no \(w\) such that both \(\text{athlete}'(w)(s)\) and \(\neg \text{athlete}'(w)(s)\) are true, it follows that \(\text{Dox}_{a,w} \cap \text{Dox}_{b,w} = \emptyset\). But then, it cannot be both
that $w \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}$ and that $w \in \text{Dox}_{b,w}$, and so in virtue of holding these beliefs, either Alphonse or Bethany excludes the world of belief $w$ from their live candidates (that is, either $w \not\in \text{Dox}_{a,w}$ or $w \not\in \text{Dox}_{b,w}$), and therefore commits a descriptive error. That is, in virtue of holding these opposed beliefs, at least one takes the world to be some way that it’s not.

An analogous result will hold for any classical semantics that characterizes attitude reports as merely placing a fixed descriptive commitment on an agent, with no ability to represent idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment not governed by those commitments. Given that such a semantics cannot capture the phenomena noted in Section 2, it’s worth looking to see how the semantics might be enriched to do so.

4 The extension of the parameter

The above issues can be resolved by introducing the relativist’s additional parameter of evaluation, and using it to track idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in agents. We extend the use of the parameter by having it treat predicates generally, even predicates that have not traditionally been given a relativist treatment, including nouns like athlete. Appeal to the parameter is therefore ubiquitous throughout the grammar, appearing wherever it tracks these allowable differences in truth assessment across the speaker population: as noted in Section 2, such differences are implicated in the assessment of vast numbers of predicates, which do not form an apparent semantic class, and so the parameter is not limited to a class of special ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions.

Following the terminology of Köhlbl (2002), and adopting a formalism similar to that of Lasersohn (2017), we call the relativist parameter the ‘perspective’ of evaluation. To begin, we can treat a perspective as an ordered pair $⟨j, v⟩$, consisting of a judge individual $j$ and a world $v$: a perspective is therefore a world-bound individual, or a centered world. The extension of an expression is then evaluated relative to both a world $w$ and a perspective $p$ of evaluation, so that $[\alpha]^{w,p}$ is the extension of expression $\alpha$ at $w$ and $p$. We then allow indices of evaluation (objects of type $s$) to be world-perspective pairs, and let the intension of expression $\alpha$ be $\lambda⟨w, p⟩_s.[\alpha]^{w,p}$, or the mapping from indices to the extension of $\alpha$ at those indices.

In order to fix the issues noted in Section 2, two changes now have to be made: the first to the predicate athlete, and the second to the attitude verb think. First, athlete must be made sensitive to the perspective parameter, to introduce perspective-sensitivity into the embedded clause of the report. We do this by writing a denotation for athlete that varies on the perspective of evaluation, as follows.

\[(13) \quad [\text{athlete}]^{w,p} = \lambda x.\text{athlete}'(p)(w)(x)\]

This requires reading athlete' as a function from perspectives to worlds to individuals to truth values, where the perspective plays the role of fixing a classical intension of a property of individuals – that is, the perspective determines an object of the sort that athlete denotes on a non-relativist semantics (cf. (9) in Section 3). In other words, athlete'(p) is the classical intension of a property, the property that constitutes being an athlete according to the idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns of $p$. Since this perspective is an individual-world pair $⟨j, v⟩$, this amounts to saying that athlete'(p) is the property that, according to $j$’s
idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in \(v\), constitutes the property of being an athlete. \(\text{athlete}'(p)(w)(x)\) is then true just in case in \(w\), \(x\) has the property determined by \(p\).

Second, \textit{think} must intensionally operate on perspectives, to ensure that belief reports made using it place a descriptive commitment on the subject not \textit{simpliciter}, but according to that subject’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment. This can be done by following Stephenson (2007a) in taking truth assessment (and so belief) to be intrinsically autocentric: to assess an \(r\)-proposition (as we can call an object of type \(\langle s, t \rangle\) in a relativist semantics, i.e. a mapping from world-perspective pairs to truth values) as true is to commit to that \(r\)-proposition mapping to true at the world of belief and the perspective that one occupies. This means writing an entry for \textit{think} as follows.\(^7\)

\[
\text{[think]}^{w,p} = \lambda \phi_{st}. \lambda x_e. \forall w' \in Dox_{x,w} [\phi(x, w)(w')]
\]

In other words, for an agent to think that an \(r\)-proposition is true is for that agent to hold that the world of belief verifies that \(r\)-proposition at their own actual perspective. What this means is that attitude reports attribute a descriptive commitment to an agent based on that agent’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, such that the same attitude report may attribute different descriptive commitments to individuals depending on those patterns.

To illustrate, we can provide the new relativist truth conditions for \textit{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete} as follows.

\[
\text{[Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete]}^{w,p} = \\
\text{[think]}^{w,p}(\lambda (w', p')_{s}. [\text{athlete}]^{w',p'}([\text{Secretariat}]^{w',p'})([\text{Alphonse}]^{w,p})
= \forall w' \in Dox_{a,w} [\text{athlete}'(a, w)(w')(s)]
\]

What (15) says is that Alphonse takes Secretariat to have whatever property is determined by his own truth assessment patterns in treating the applicability of the meaning of \textit{athlete}. Depending on how he is disposed to assess for truth regarding the meaning of \textit{athlete} – that is, depending on which property he takes an individual to need to have in order to be an athlete – the descriptive commitments he incurs in virtue of believing Secretariat to be an athlete will differ. In short, he takes Secretariat to have whatever property he takes to be the property of being an athlete.

Some illustrations may be useful. Suppose that in worlds \(u\) and \(v\), Alphonse has the exact same descriptive commitments, including descriptive commitments regarding Secretariat: he rightly holds that Secretariat is a Virginia Thoroughbred, that he won the Triple Crown, and so on for every other descriptive matter, so that \(Dox_{a,u} = Dox_{a,v}\). But Alphonse’s dispositions pertaining to truth assessment differ in these two scenarios, in particular with regard the conditions under which he takes an individual to be an athlete: in \(u\), Alphonse takes any competitor in a physical contest to be an athlete, human or not, and in \(v\) he is more restrictive, taking only human competitors to be athletes. This is represented in (16).

\(^7\)Note that one could also make the denotation of \textit{think} vary on the perspective parameter, to account for the fact that agents may vary in their truth assessments as to the conditions under which they take an agent to think something. As this is unnecessary for present purposes, I leave \textit{think} with a perspective-invariant denotation. Note also that there is no problem with an agent believing an \(r\)-proposition \textit{simpliciter}, which does determine a coherent descriptive commitment: \textit{pace} Kneer (2020), there is no issue with \(r\)-propositions being too ‘incomplete’ to serve as objects of belief without supplementation by some other parameter value.
(16) a. $\text{athlete}'(a, u) = \lambda w. \lambda x. \text{compete}'(w)(x)$

b. $\text{athlete}'(a, v) = \lambda w. \lambda x. \text{compete}'(w)(x) \land \text{human}'(w)(x)$

Evaluating the attitude report \textit{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete} given the truth conditions in (15), we see that the truth values of this report differ when evaluated at $u$ versus at $v$ (in both cases evaluating relative to an arbitrary perspective $p$).

\begin{align*}
(17) \quad a. \quad [\text{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete}]^{u,p} &= \forall w \in Dox_{a,u} [\text{athlete}'(a, u)(w)(s)] \\
&= \forall w \in Dox_{a,u} [\text{compete}'(w)(s)] \\
&= 1 \\

b. \quad [\text{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete}]^{v,p} &= \forall w \in Dox_{a,v} [\text{athlete}'(a, v)(w)(s)] \\
&= \forall w \in Dox_{a,v} [\text{compete}'(w)(s) \land \text{human}'(w)(s)] \\
&= 0
\end{align*}

That is, at $u$, \textit{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete} is true, while at $v$, the same report is false, and this despite the fact that Alphonse’s descriptive commitments are identical in $u$ and $v$. This is the right thing to say: in $u$, Alphonse takes any competitor to be an athlete, and since he rightly holds Secretariat is such a competitor, he does think that Secretariat is an athlete. In $v$, by contrast, he takes only human competitors to be athletes, and since he rightly holds that Secretariat is a horse, he doesn’t think that he’s an athlete. Despite Alphonse’s descriptive commitments not changing between the scenarios, his ‘opinion’ as to whether Secretariat is an athlete does change, and this change in opinion is driven solely by a distinction in his idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment.

We can now return to the three related features of attitude reports outlined in Section 2, to see how this relativist addition accounts for them. First, we cannot tell whether the report \textit{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete} is true in virtue of knowing about Alphonse’s descriptive commitments alone. This is shown from the above, that there can be two worlds, one at which such a report is true, another at which it is false, holding these commitments fixed. To know whether Alphonse thinks Secretariat is an athlete, we must also know something about his idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, i.e. something about what he takes the meaning of \textit{athlete} to be applicable to. Second, we can see that Alphonse might change his beliefs as to whether Secretariat is an athlete just in virtue of changing these truth assessment patterns, even without changing his descriptive commitments about the world. This again is shown by the above, since if $v$ is a world-state that follows $u$, this represents Alphonse changing only his (non-descriptive) truth assessment patterns, and changing his beliefs as a result.\footnote{What this means effectively is that $\langle a, u \rangle$ and $\langle a, v \rangle$ are perspectives that differ relevantly to cause a change in truth value when the attitude report is evaluated at $u$ versus at $v$. This in turn means that something relevant about the world-state has changed: in $u$, certain facts about Alphonse’s dispositions hold that no longer hold in $v$.}

Finally, we can show that two distinct agents can incur different descriptive commitments in virtue of believing the same thing in the same world, so long as their idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment relevantly differ. This again is shown by the above, swapping out $\langle a, v \rangle$ with $\langle b, u \rangle$, or the perspective of Bethany in $u$, still assuming that Bethany and Alphonse
have all the same descriptive commitments and are knowledgeable about Secretariat. If in \( u \), Alphonse takes any competitor to be an athlete, while Bethany takes only human competitors to be athletes, then the results in (16) and (17) are analogous, across agents in a single world: evaluated at \( u \), *Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete* is true, while *Bethany thinks that Secretariat is an athlete* is false. Alphonse and Bethany thus differ in ‘opinion’ as to whether Secretariat is an athlete, despite sharing all their descriptive commitments.

It can finally be shown that this change to the semantics makes descriptively faultless disagreement possible, so long as the truth assessment patterns of distinct agents in the same world relevantly differ. Again, let Alphonse and Bethany have identical descriptive commitments in \( u \), and let them be fully knowledgeable about Secretariat, but let their perspectives be constrained in \( u \) as follows.

(18)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{athlete}'(a, u) = \lambda w. \lambda x. \text{compete}'(w)(x) \\
\text{b. } & \text{athlete}'(b, u) = \lambda w. \lambda x. \text{compete}'(w)(x) \land \text{human}'(w)(x)
\end{align*}
\]

Then the truth values of the reports *Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete* and *Bethany thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete* are as follows.

(19)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \begin{aligned}
[\text{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete}]^u \cdot p
= & \forall w \in \text{Dox}_{a,u} [\text{athlete}'(a, u)(w)(s)] \\
= & \forall w \in \text{Dox}_{a,u} [\text{compete}'(w)(s)] \\
= & 1
\end{aligned} \\
\text{b. } & \begin{aligned}
[\text{Bethany thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete}]^u \cdot p
= & \forall w \in \text{Dox}_{b,u} [\neg \text{athlete}'(b, u)(w)(s)] \\
= & \forall w \in \text{Dox}_{b,u} [\neg (\text{compete}'(w)(s) \land \text{human}'(w)(s))] \\
= & 1
\end{aligned}
\end{align*}
\]

This means that the respective descriptive commitments that Alphonse and Bethany take on in holding their beliefs are as follows: Alphonse takes the classical proposition in (20a) to be true at the world of belief, and Bethany takes the classical proposition in (20b) to be true at the world of belief. That is, Alphonse takes Secretariat to be a competitor in physical contests, while Bethany takes Secretariat not to be both such a competitor and a human.

(20)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \lambda w. \text{compete}'(w)(s) \\
\text{b. } & \lambda w. \neg (\text{compete}'(w)(s) \land \text{human}'(w)(s))
\end{align*}
\]

But where \( u \) is a world in which, like in the actual world, Secretariat is a nonhuman competitor in physical contests, both these propositions are verified at \( u \). And so we see from (19) that Alphonse thinks Secretariat is an athlete, while Bethany thinks he’s not, despite the fact that in holding these beliefs, neither excludes the world of belief from their doxastic alternatives, and so neither makes a descriptive error.

On the other hand, their respective beliefs are not doxastically cotenable. This is because Bethany disbelieves the very same thing that Alphonse believes, namely that Secretariat is an athlete, or the r-proposition \( \lambda \langle w, p \rangle, \text{athlete}'(p)(w)(s) \) (that is, both agents stand in the belief-relation to the same semantic object). And no agent in any world can both believe and disbelieve such an r-proposition without descriptive incoherency: that is, any agent \( x \)
who both believes (as in (21a)) and disbelieves (as in (21b)) such an r-proposition in \(w\) has an empty set of doxastic alternatives in \(w\), regardless of their idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns (21c).

\[
\begin{align*}
(21) & \quad (a) \quad \forall w' \in Dox_{x,w}[\text{athlete}'(x,w)(w')(s)] \\
& \quad (b) \quad \forall w' \in Dox_{x,w}[\neg\text{athlete}'(x,w)(w')(s)] \\
& \quad (c) \quad Dox_{x,w} = \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

And so we have descriptively faultless disagreement: distinct agents can hold doxastically non-cotenable beliefs in the same world, despite the fact that neither makes a descriptive error in doing so. This does not necessarily mean that both Alphonse and Bethany’s beliefs are true, or correct – for instance, if one thinks that nonhumans can be athletes, one can assess Alphonse’s belief as true, but Bethany’s as false. Nor does it mean that Alphonse or Bethany might not be at fault for some non-descriptive reason in believing what they do. The point is simply that in holding these non-cotenable beliefs, neither makes a descriptive error.

This sort of faultless disagreement depends on a misalignment of Alphonse and Bethany’s non-descriptive truth assessment patterns: where the way they assess for truth is relevantly the same, say such that \(\text{athlete}'(a,u) = \text{athlete}'(b,u)\), then again it is not possible for one to believe that Secretariat is an athlete, while the other believes that he’s not, without one of them excluding the world of belief from their doxastic alternatives. This is the right thing to say: if both treat \(\text{athlete}\) as applicable to individuals with the same properties, then if they disagree in this way as to whether Secretariat is an athlete, one of the two must be making a mistake about the way the world is.

On the above picture, a vanilla doxastic verb like \(\text{think}\) requires only that the agent assess the r-proposition denoted by the complement clause as true. Since on a relativist semantics, such an assessment typically commits an agent both to a descriptive commitment and to a non-descriptive idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment, \(\text{think}\) is a neutral verb that indiscriminately reports either an agent’s ‘factual’ commitments, or their ‘opinions’ as to what is true given these factual commitments, or both.

Where the agent’s descriptive commitments are previously known, the communicative effect of a report using \(\text{think}\) will tend to be to convey the agent’s ‘opinion’ determined by their idiosyncrasies in truth assessment, while where the agent’s idiosyncrasies are previously known, or where there are no relevant idiosyncrasies that would make a difference to the truth of the report, the report will primarily convey what the agent thinks about the way the world is. But often, both are at stake simultaneously, and as far as the verb is concerned, there is no grammatically encoded distinction between reports of commitments of ‘fact’ or ‘opinion.’ This indeed is how \(\text{think}\) operates, and so the present treatment captures an ordinary, ubiquitous feature of these reports that a classical semantics ignores: to know what Alphonse thinks is not just to know how he takes the world to be, and in fact \(\text{think}\) is a verb canonically used to report ‘opinions,’ which are not reported using only a restricted class of ‘subjective’ predicates.

This is the basic extension of the relativist parameter: an analogous treatment can be given to predicates generally, making them sensitive to the perspective of evaluation, as well as to any other intensional operators that, like \(\text{think}\), similarly place commitments on agents.
relative to a perspective. Having said this, we can turn to some refinements of this basic treatment, and fold this extension into the wider relativist semantics.

5 Some refinements

There are two refinements that are useful in amending the basic extension of the relativist parameter provided in Section 4. The first change allows agents, rather than occupying a single perspective, to admit a range of candidate perspectives. This accounts for the fact that the idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment of agents allows for indecision in fixing classical intensions from the meaning of expressions, rather than determining a single such intension precisely. The second change consists in constraining the possible perspectives that an agent is capable of adopting according to the grammar, in order to place assignments of classical intensions to the meaning of predicates ‘within the pale’ of ordinary linguistic interpretation. This amounts to constraining the lexical semantics of those predicates, so that an agent can take on only a limited range of descriptive commitments in their truth assessment concerning their meaning.

As to the first refinement, note that the treatment in Section 4 has each agent occupy a single perspective in a world, as a perspective simply is a pair of an individual and a world. Since the role of a perspective in the meaning of a predicate like *athlete* is to fix a classical intension, and a perspective represents an agent’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, this effectively means that an agent in a world always exactly fixes a single classical intension for such predicates in a world by their patterns of truth assessment. In other words, the treatment above forces agents to be perfectly precise in determining what they treat such predicates as applicable to. The specifications on how Alphonse and Bethany’s perspectives constrain *athlete* in (18), for instance, mean that both agents treat the meaning of *athlete* as applying or not applying to each individual depending on whether it has or lacks a single, well-defined property.

This is not typically how agents’ truth assessments work: their application of the meaning of predicates is no more decided upon a single perfectly-defined pattern of assessment than their descriptive commitments are perfectly decided on a single world-state. Rather, their dispositions leave multiple options open as to how it is possible in principle to idiosyncratically assess for truth. In particular, an agent often leaves cases undecided, as to whether the meaning of a predicate is applicable to a certain descriptive scenario – for instance, an agent might have no settled opinion on whether Secretariat is an athlete, despite knowing all relevant descriptive facts about him. That agent might not decide consistently as to whether nonhuman competitors are athletes, or may simply never have opportunity to decide, so that their dispositions do not relevantly settle the matter, or they may be hesitant as to whether the meaning of the predicate applies, or be ‘decidedly indifferent’ in refusing to make a decision one way or the other.

What we want is therefore a way to represent that an agent can admit multiple candidate perspectives in their belief state, just as they can admit multiple candidate world states. We accomplish this by folding perspectives into the doxastic alternatives admitted by an agent. While before we held doxastic alternatives to be a set of worlds, tracking only an agent’s descriptive commitments, we now see that an agent’s beliefs are determined by an agent’s
 descriptive commitments and idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment taken together. And so we say that a doxastic alternative is not just a world, but an ordered pair of a world and a perspective, and that an agent $x$’s set of doxastic alternatives in $w$, $\text{Dox}_{x,w}$, is a set of such world-perspective pairs, each of which is a pairing compatible with the agent’s belief state.

This requires reinterpreting what a perspective is, though a perspective serves the same compositional role in the semantics as before. We now say that a perspective is not a world-individual pair, but rather a precisely-determined pattern of possible truth assessment. That is, a perspective abstractly represents one possible way of assessing for truth, which decides unambiguously all matters concerning commitment to truth or falsity, given that the relevant descriptive matters are doxastically settled. Real agents do not possess or occupy one such perspective, but leave many matters of truth assessment undecided, even where they are descriptively decided as to how the world is.\(^{9}\)

The idea is that where $\langle w', p \rangle$ is a pair contained in $\text{Dox}_{x,w}$, $w'$ is a world compatible with $x$’s total descriptive commitments in the usual way, and $p$ is a perspective compatible with $x$’s total patterns of truth assessment. This in turn means that $p$ is a perspective that fixes classical intensions of expressions in a way that does not render the meaning of an expression inapplicable in any case where the agent treats it as applicable, or vice-versa. The pair together represent a combined way the world could be and a perfectly fine-grained pattern of truth assessment that $x$’s doxastic state is consistent with.\(^{10}\)

The final change that needs to be made in implementing this refinement is to alter the denotation of $\text{think}$, so that it universally quantifies over all of an agent’s doxastic alternatives, and evaluates an r-proposition relative to the worlds and perspectives contained therein, as opposed to singling out a single perspective as represented in (14) above.

\[
\text{[think]}_{w,p} = \lambda \phi_{\text{st.}}. \lambda x_e. \forall \langle w, p' \rangle \in \text{Dox}_{x,w}[\phi(w', p)]
\]

That is, $\text{think}$ requires that the agent’s combined descriptive commitments and idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment verify the r-proposition denoted by the complement clause. This in turn reflects the fact that the agent is ‘decided,’ both descriptively and in their idiosyncratic dispositions to assess for truth, in such a way as to assess that r-proposition as true. An agent may then be undecided as to the truth or falsity of an r-proposition, even

\(^{9}\)For similar comments regarding an agent’s doxastic state admitting multiple ‘outlooks,’ cf. Coppock (2018).

\(^{10}\)Treating doxastic alternatives as pairs of worlds and perspectives in this way leaves open the possibility that an agent’s beliefs encode a dependence between their descriptive commitments and idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns. As such belief states do seem to exist, I choose to encode this possibility. Here is an example. Suppose that Alphonse reads in *Sports Illustrated* that Secretariat is one of the greatest American athletes of all time, and believes it – he takes for granted that if Sports Illustrated deems an individual to be an athlete, they are. But he is not opinionated as to whether Secretariat is human, and the way he assesses for truth leaves open the question whether athletes can be non-humans. In this scenario, Alphonse’s doxastic state leaves open the possibility that athletes must be human, and it leaves open the possibility that Secretariat is non-human, but as he is independently committed to Secretariat being an athlete, it does not leave open the possibility both that Secretariat is non-human and athletes must be human. Such a belief state would include no ordered pair reflecting such a combination of world-state and perspective, despite the relevant world-states and perspectives being included elsewhere in other pairs throughout Alphonse’s alternatives.

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if their descriptive commitments are relevantly decided, if their doxastic state contains both perspectives that verify and perspectives that falsify the r-proposition at the relevant worlds.

To illustrate, first take the new truth conditions of *Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete*, along with the truth conditions of the corresponding report of the negated attitude, *Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete*.

(23) a. \([\text{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete}]^{w,p}\)
   \(= \left[\text{think}^{w,p}(\lambda\langle w',p'\rangle_s.\text{[athlete]}^{w',p'}(\text{[Secretariat]}^{w',p'}))\right](\text{[Alphonse]}^{w,p})\)
   \(= \forall\langle w',p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{athlete}'(p')(w')(s)]\)

b. \([\text{Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete}]^{w,p}\)
   \(= \left[\text{think}^{w,p}(\lambda\langle w',p'\rangle_s.\text{[not]}^{w',p'}(\text{[athlete]}^{w',p'}(\text{[Secretariat]}^{w',p'})))\right](\text{[Alphonse]}^{w,p})\)
   \(= \forall\langle w',p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\neg\text{athlete}'(p')(w')(s)]\)

Now suppose again that Alphonse knows all the relevant factual information about Secretariat: this means that all the worlds appearing in his doxastic alternatives are decided that he is a racehorse, and so on. Given these fixed descriptive commitments, and the truth conditions described in (23) above, there are three possible ways that the above two reports can be evaluated for truth, depending on what sorts of perspectives Alphonse’s doxastic alternatives admit, i.e. what sorts of idiosyncratic truth assessment Alphonse adopts with respect to whether Secretariat is an athlete, given his fixed descriptive commitments.

First, suppose that in world \(t\), Alphonse is fully decided that any competitor in a physical competition, human or not, is an athlete. And so there are no perspectives admitted in his alternatives that fix a classical intension for *athlete* in such a way that excludes a racehorse like Secretariat from the meaning of the predicate. Given his descriptive commitments, this means that all his alternatives verify the r-proposition that Secretariat is an athlete. And so at \(t\), (23a) is true, while (23b) is false: Alphonse does think Secretariat is an athlete. Second, suppose that in \(u\), Alphonse is fully decided that only human competitors are athletes. And so there are no perspectives admitted in his alternatives that fix a classical intension for *athlete* in such a way that include a racehorse like Secretariat in the meaning of the predicate. Given his descriptive commitments, this means that all his alternatives falsify the r-proposition that Secretariat is an athlete. And so at \(u\), (23a) is false, while (23b) is true: Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is not an athlete.

Third, suppose that in \(v\), Alphonse is undecided as to whether nonhuman competitors are athletes. This means that there are perspectives admitted in his doxastic alternatives that determine a classical intension for *athlete* that Secretariat verifies, given Alphonse’s descriptive commitments, and other perspectives that determine a classical intension that Secretariat falsifies. This in turn means that the same r-proposition, given the worlds Alphonse admits in his alternatives, is verified by some of the perspectives in his alternatives, and falsified by others. The result is that neither (23a) nor (23b) is true at \(v\): Alphonse neither thinks that Secretariat is an athlete, nor that he is not, but is undecided, despite his descriptive commitments. His dispositions to assess for truth are not precise enough to decide on this case.

This refinement does not distinguish between the various ways it is possible to be undecided with respect to one’s truth assessments, but it is sufficient to offer the bare formal distinction between being decided and undecided, and brings the way agents adopt idiosyn-
cratic truth assessment commitments into into an appropriate formal symmetry with the way they admit descriptive commitments.

As to the second refinement, according to the way perspectives are treated in Section 4, there is no particular limit on what sorts of perspectives exist in the grammar, and so no particular limit on what sorts of intensional properties can be fixed for the meaning of a predicate like *athlete*. Another way of saying the same thing is that the compositional skeleton in (14) places no sort of limit on what kinds of function *athlete*' is, and so there is no limit on what sort of property *athlete*'(*p*) might be, for some *p*.

But the grammar does not allow predicates to be interpreted so freely, and while attitude reports containing those predicates do allow a variety of combined attributions of descriptive commitments and idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns to agents, this variety is not unlimited. For instance, while we’ve seen that a report like in (24), repeated here from (1) above, can place various descriptive commitments on Alphonse, depending on the way he assesses for truth, the range within which these commitments vary is constrained by the lexical semantics of the predicate.

(24) Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.

Regardless of Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, for instance, (24) cannot attribute to him a descriptive commitment that Secretariat is a refrigerator, or a castle. The report, in other words, countenances only a narrow range of variation within which Alphonse can hold this same attitude while taking on different descriptive commitments. The range of these possible commitments has boundaries, meaning that the lexical semantics of *athlete* can only determine so many classical intensions of properties in such a report relative to a perspective.11

Let ATHLETE be a set of intensions of properties of individuals that the grammar countenances as possible interpretations of the meaning of *athlete*. We say that all properties falling within this set are ‘within the pale’ of the ordinary interpretation of the predicate, while all those falling outside the set are ‘beyond the pale’ of its ordinary interpretation, and not licensed by the grammar. We then say that all perspectives are such that they fix a classical intension for the meaning of *athlete* within the pale of ordinary interpretation.

(25) For all *p*: *athlete*'(*p*) ∈ ATHLETE

This essentially constrains the lexical semantics of the predicate, by explicating what possible patterns of truth assessment there are according to the grammar, which is equivalently a partial explication of what it is to assess r-propositions for truth: thus, for instance, to assess *Secretariat is an athlete* as true, according to (25), just is to commit oneself to a

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11 There may be marginal cases in which such interpretations ‘outside the pale’ of the ordinary lexical semantics of a predicate can be accessed by the compositional semantics. For instance, if Alphonse is a learner of English who for some reason mistakenly thinks that *athlete* means ‘refrigerator,’ and goes around calling a refrigerator an athlete, it may be acceptable to say *Alphonse thinks that the refrigerator is an athlete*, where Alphonse’s non-standard perspectives that assess *athlete* as if it meant ‘refrigerator’ are accessible by the semantics to yield a true attitude report. My judgments about such a scenario are unclear, but in the vast majority of cases, *Alphonse thinks that the refrigerator is an athlete* simply places a very bizarre descriptive commitment on Alphonse, regardless of how idiosyncratic his truth assessments are, and this is what the treatment in the text predicts.
descriptive commitment within some grammatically determined range. One’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment take care of the rest, and specify the exact commitment of the belief within this range. A similar principle holds for any lexical semantics that admits a restricted range of interpretation through sensitivity to the perspective parameter.

The restriction in (25) is fairly rudimentary, as it does not tell us exactly what set athlete is. Further, it draws a sharp distinction between properties within and without the set, which is unrealistic given the vagueness that attends the assessment of natural language predicates: there is likely in reality no such sharp boundary between properties that are within the pale for the interpretation of athlete and those that are beyond the pale. In fact, it is reasonable to think that there is higher-order uncertainty, and even metalinguistic dispute among speakers, about which properties are included in such a set, and which are not.

Such a set further tells us nothing about how the properties within it might be preferentially structured: perhaps certain properties are more canonical than others even within the set, and perhaps different predicates have their lexical semantics structured in different ways, such that e.g. some carry a prototype semantics judged by closeness to an exemplar, while others are vaguer or more multiform. These are deep questions about lexical semantics that the mere formalism adopted here doesn’t address. But what we do have is the bare distinction between permissible and impermissible construals of the meaning of a property according to the grammar, which must be allowed to account for the fact that some such properties are uncontroversially admissible, while others are uncontroversially inadmissible.

### 6 Integration with previous use of the parameter

The question now arises: what relation does this extended use of the relativist parameter have to previous relativist treatments of narrower classes of ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions? To use the favored example of a ‘predicate of personal taste,’ tasty can easily be made sensitive to the perspective parameter, as usual on relativist treatments.

\[(26) \quad \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{ } \text{
boundaries of variation, which grammatically acceptable perspectives one is to admit is governed by further grammatical principles in the case of tasty, while this is not so with athlete.

With an experiential predicate like tasty in particular, the perspectives that an agent is obliged to admit in truth assessment track that agent’s experiential dispositions in a certain way. Roughly, to assess as true the r-proposition that something is tasty is to commit to that thing being tasty according to one’s own experiential dispositions. There is no corresponding requirement on a predicate like athlete: idiosyncratic ways of assessing for truth with the meaning of the predicate are left open, but they are not governed by any such grammatical principle, meaning that the context of assessment plays no non-trivial grammatical role in explicating its lexical semantics.

To illustrate, we can write a principle governing assessment with tasty in the following way, by limiting the perspectives it is possible for an agent to adopt according to the grammar. In particular, we say that there are no perspectives that an agent can admit that do not track that agent’s experiential dispositions in a certain way. For tasty, the lexical semantics presumably tracks a disposition to experience gustatory pleasure, so we write this as follows, and say that gus''(x)(y)(w) is true just in case in w, y is disposed to produce gustatory pleasure in x, in the appropriate tasting circumstances.\(^{12}\)

\[(27)\] For any agent x and world w:
For all \((w',p) \in Dox_{x,w}: tasty'(p) = \lambda w''.\lambda y.e.gus''(x)(y)(w'')\]

What (27) says is that the perspectives in all an agent’s doxastic alternatives must be constrained in such a way that the classical intension determined from the meaning of tasty by those perspectives is the property of being disposed to produce gustatory pleasure in the agent. This is a kind of postulate that constrains the lexical semantics of tasty, by restricting what sorts of perspectives it is possible to adopt in treating the meaning of tasty in truth assessments, according to the grammar. The only perspectives adoptable by an agent are such that to think that something is tasty commits that agent to being disposed to like its taste. Because there are no adoptable perspectives that don’t constrain assessment using tasty in this way, this is effectively a principle placing restrictions on what it is to assess r-propositions for truth: for example, to assess the r-proposition that licorice is tasty, \(\lambda \langle w,p \rangle_s.tasty'(p)(w)(l)\), as true just is to take on the descriptive commitment that one is disposed to like the taste of licorice.

How this works compositionally can be illustrated with an attitude report like Alphonse thinks that licorice is tasty.

\[(28)\] [Alphonse thinks that licorice is tasty]^{w,p}_{w,p} = [\text{think}^{w,p}(\lambda (w',p')_s.[\text{tasty}^{w',p'}(\text{licorice}^{w',p'})))](\text{Alphonse}^{w,p}) = \forall (w',p') \in Dox_{a,w}[tasty'(p')'(w')'(l)] = \forall (w',p') \in Dox_{a,w}[gus''(a)(l)(w')]

\(^{12}\)This principle is a simplification, in that it requires the believing agent to treat tasty as determining a single classical intension of a property, which is the idealization we sought to get away from in Section 5. The simplification is useful for expository purposes: I return to its remedy briefly in the conclusion in Section 8.
The substitution in the final line is licensed by the principle in (27): since all perspectives that Alphonse’s doxastic alternatives admit as live candidates for his patterns of truth assessment require that he treat *tasty* as applicable to things that he would like the taste of, the descriptive commitments attributed to Alphonse by this belief report are just that he is disposed to like the taste of licorice.\(^{13}\)

And so the ordinary relativist semantics for a predicate like *tasty* is recapitulated in terms of the present treatment: what Alphonse believes is that licorice is tasty *simpliciter*, and in doing so he commits to being disposed to like the taste of licorice. The usual relativist results all follow: whether an agent believes that something is tasty is tracked by their commitments as to the taste of licorice and its interaction with their own experiential dispositions, meaning that distinct agents can incur distinct descriptive commitments in believing that very same thing. The possibility of descriptively faultless disagreement in the sense laid out in Section 4 also arises, so long as agents hold doxastically non-cotenable beliefs about what is tasty, though they have relevantly different experiential dispositions that the agents each represent descriptively accurately with their own beliefs.

Any speaker with a linguistic competence who has mastered the lexical semantics of *tasty* as constrained by the clause in (27) then incurs the usual constraints placed on them by both the compositional semantics and the pragmatics of their language. For instance, competence with the compositional semantics leads the speaker to interpret the truth conditions of attitude reports like *Alphonse thinks that licorice is tasty* as in (28). Competence with the pragmatics then causes the speaker, for instance, to make assertions to the effect that something is tasty only when they take themselves to be disposed to like the taste of it. This is because a pragmatically competent agent knows that assertion implies belief, and a mastery of the above clause means the speaker understands that committing to such a belief implies committing to having such an experiential disposition (cf. MacFarlane’s 2014: 4 ‘TP principle,’ as to how one’s experiential dispositions relate to willingness to call things tasty).

The picture that we’re left with is then as follows. We can call linguistic ‘subjectivity’ a grammatical phenomenon, and say that an expression exhibits subjectivity (that is, sensitivity to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment) insofar as its extension varies on the perspective of evaluation. There are in turn two broad ways that this perspective parameter might function. First, its interpretation may be constrained by principles that require agents to assess for truth in a certain way, depending on the contexts of assessment they occupy

\(^{13}\) Note, this means that assessing the contents of so-called ‘taste predications’ as true places an ordinary descriptive commitment on the believer as to the way the world is. This means that, just as with any other belief, it is possible to be descriptively mistaken in holding the belief that licorice is tasty. In the case of (28) above, this would happen if Alphonse thinks that licorice is tasty, but in fact he doesn’t, or wouldn’t, like the taste of it. This is one reason that the language of ‘opinion’ and ‘subjectivity’ can be misleading, as it seems to imply a lack of ‘factual’ stakes in these beliefs. Against views like that of Coppock (2018), who effectively hard-codes a notion of faultlessness into the semantics through the notion of ‘discretionary’ propositions, relativists have always recognized that such beliefs are prone to error, from Kölbl’s (2002: 33) dictum that “Believing something that is not true according to one’s perspective constitutes a mistake.” See also the comments in Köbel (2009: 383, fn. 12) and Lasersohn (2017: 93-94). This fact has sometimes been obscured in the literature by the insistence that agents have ‘epistemic privilege’ in matters of taste (cf. Lasersohn 2005: 655), but this is misleading, in that we are no more guarded from error in holding that we would like the taste of something than we are in anything else. It’s true that once we taste something, we have excellent evidence for whether it’s tasty (to us), but this is no different from any matter open to confirmation through ordinary observation.
– for instance, a principle governing the assessment of *tasty* requires assessing based on the experiential dispositions of the assessor. These are the sorts of expressions that relativists have traditionally been concerned with, and we can say that they exhibit ‘strong subjectivity,’ which involves (i) sensitivity to the perspective of evaluation, combined with (ii) supplementary principles that require perspectives admitted by an agent to track features of that agent’s context of assessment.

But we’ve also noted a second kind of subjectivity that relativists have not typically concerned themselves with.\textsuperscript{14} This kind of subjectivity, which we can call ‘weak subjectivity,’ involves mere sensitivity to the perspective of evaluation, with no supplementary grammatical principles governing how an agent is to admit the perspectives relevant to the expressions’ assessment. When an expression shows weak subjectivity, it is thus ‘up to’ the agent how to assess for truth within the boundaries that the grammar allows, and the decision to assess one way or the other is grammatically arbitrary.

Strong and weak subjectivity thus have in common a grammatical sensitivity to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, which may vary across the speaker population even given the stable meaning of the expressions involved. Strong subjectivity is then ‘strong’ for two reasons. First, it requires that two grammatical conditions be met, such that one (that there be a principle governing the adoption of perspectives in evaluating the expression) is grammatically dependent on the other (that the expression be sensitive to the perspective parameter in the first place). Second, it places strict commitments on assessing agents, who are ‘forced’ by the grammar to assess strongly subjective expressions in a certain way. Weak subjectivity is then ‘weak’ for two corresponding reasons. First, it requires only that the weaker grammatical condition (sensitivity to the perspective parameter) be met. Second, it places no grammatical requirement on the admission of perspectives on the assessing agent.\textsuperscript{15}

It’s worth reflecting on what the admission of perspectives into an agent’s doxastic state in a way that resolves weakly subjective matters of truth assessment actually amounts to on this picture. For an agent to assess an *r*-proposition as true is just for that agent to take on certain commitments. We’ve been concerned with two sorts of commitments incurred by the agent in the foregoing, though there may well be more than these. First, there is the descriptive commitment an agent takes on in believing something, and second, there is the pragmatic commitment a linguistically competent agent takes on in believing something, e.g. to make ingenuous assertions using linguistic expressions denoting the believed *r*-proposition,

\textsuperscript{14}This is not true in all cases: for instance, some relativists have suggested that a relativist semantics ought to be applied to the drawing of cutoffs for the evaluation of positive-form relative gradable adjectives, which is in present terminology a matter of weak subjectivity; I return to this topic briefly in the conclusion in Section 8. Cf. Richard (2004), who among other things talks about idiosyncratically evaluating whether someone is rich, given that they have a certain amount of money, and Lasersohn (2017: 228 ff.), who provides some comments on relativist treatments of scalar cutoffs and degree morphology of excess and sufficiency.

\textsuperscript{15}This is another reason that the language of ‘subjectivity’ or ‘opinion’ can be misleading here. Expressions that exhibit strong subjectivity are sometimes taken to be those that paradigmatically express matters of ‘opinion’ – but one thing the word ‘opinion’ suggests is a freedom on the part of the agent to decide something arbitrarily, and strongly subjective expressions actually lack this sort of freedom in their assessment. Likewise, to call a weakly subjective expression ‘subjective’ may imply that its idiosyncratic assessment is governed by the features of some subject, which is typically not characteristic of their assessment. Along these lines, one could say that weak subjectivity tracks ‘opinion,’ and strong subjectivity tracks ‘subjectivity’ proper, though no non-technical terminology can capture all the nuances here.
and so on.

For any of the r-propositions discussed so far, we’ve seen that to assess them as true is to take on a certain descriptive commitment as to how the world is, which is invariant across the speaker population. Where the relevant r-proposition varies in its truth value on the perspective parameter at a world, and this variation is governed by strong subjectivity, belief in the r-proposition involves a further descriptive commitment, sensitive to the context of assessment of the assessor – for instance, to assess as true that licorice is tasty is to take on a commitment involving the taste of licorice and one’s own experiential dispositions. But we’ve also seen that where the relevant r-proposition varies in its truth value on the perspective parameter at a world, and this variation is governed by weak subjectivity, the agent apparently takes on no additional descriptive commitment in resolving the truth or falsity of the r-proposition merely by the admission or exclusion of the relevant perspectives, since the agent is simply ‘free’ to do this even given a fixed set of descriptive commitments.

We therefore cannot spell out what it is to resolve matters of weak subjectivity through truth assessment in terms of descriptive commitment. But then what is left? The answer, I suggest, lies in the observation first made in Section 2, that resolving such matters tends to have a ‘merely linguistic’ air. For instance, if Alphonse is fully knowledgeable about Secretariat, his deciding to think that it is true or false that Secretariat is an athlete seems to consist grammatically in nothing but deciding to use expressions that mean what athlete means in a certain way – namely, in such a way that Secretariat verifies them, according to his descriptive commitments. In other words, in such a situation, Alphonse can indeed change his beliefs merely by deciding to use any word that means the same as athlete in a certain way: he can apply them so as to include Secretariat, and thereby come to think that Secretariat is an athlete, or apply them so as to exclude him, and thereby come to think that he is not an athlete.16

I claim that the reason this is so is because of the independently-attested pragmatic principle, already noted above, that a linguistically competent agent is expected only to ingenuously assert r-propositions that the agent believes (and to react in other truth-affirming ways to expressions that denote the r-proposition, such as not denying it, not retracting it, drawing appropriate inferences from it, and so on). In the case of beliefs that accompany a descriptive commitment, this linguistic behavior is grammatically indicative of that further descriptive commitment. In the case of resolving weakly subjective matters, though, it is grammatically indicative of nothing further at all, since there simply is no attendant descriptive commitment. In other words, the pragmatic requirement that an agent commit themselves to certain linguistic behaviors involving expressions that denote an r-proposition if they assess that r-proposition as true is quite literally all there is grammatically to truth

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16I take for granted here that there is no further material in the semantics of athlete that places additional non-linguistic, non-descriptive commitments on the assessing agent. For example, Plunkett & Sundell (2013) suggest that athlete might be a thick normative term, requiring somehow an attitude of praise toward the subject of which it’s predicated. If something like this is right, then believing an individual to be an athlete might place certain positive attitudinal commitments upon the believer. I do not think this is right, since even if thinking an individual is an athlete may be socially associated with certain attitudes toward that individual, these are not plausibly encoded into the meaning of the predicate itself at any level of description, since there is no grammatical problem with having just about any sort of attitude, negative or positive, toward athletes, and there is no reason that calling someone an athlete can’t be construed as an insult in the right circumstances.
assessment that resolves weak subjectivity. In these cases, to use expressions in certain ways is to change one’s doxastic state, and in some cases to change what one assesses as true or false.

To be clear, the proposal is not that the perspective parameter, or truth assessment more generally, be thought of intrinsically in terms of the linguistic behavior of agents. The gloss on what a perspective is remains as before: it is a grammatically licensed idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment, and truth assessment is not intrinsically a matter of linguistic behavior, since it is largely tracked by descriptive commitments (and possibly other non-linguistic commitments). However, specifically for agents that have a linguistic competence, and are therefore beholden to the pragmatic norms governing their speech acts, truth assessment is partially a matter of linguistic behavior. For linguistic agents, assessing for truth typically involves taking on descriptive commitments, and also being committed to using linguistic expressions in a certain way. The point is that for such linguistically competent agents, where the compositional semantics produces weak subjectivity, and therefore the descriptive commitments drop out of the picture, the pragmatic principle remains. In these cases, truth assessment within these limits is indeed solely a matter of linguistic behavior, as far as the grammar is concerned. Extra-grammatically, all bets are off: assessing an r-proposition as true may be associated with any number of other attitudinal or social commitments.

Two final illustrations may help to illustrate the link between resolving weak subjectivity and linguistic behavior. Consider first the case of a non-linguistic agent to which beliefs can be attributed, like a dog. Now take a report like the following.

(29) Alphonse thinks that it’s a squirrel.

If Alphonse is a dog, then (29) does not attribute any linguistic dispositions to him, though it does attribute the usual descriptive commitments: not being a linguistic agent, the pragmatic principles governing speech act behavior are inapplicable to him. Our formalism accounts for this thus: since to resolve weak subjectivity regarding the interpretation of

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17 And so the present approach needs to be distinguished from those that either hard-code a parameter governing linguistic behavior into the grammar, or treat certain kinds of disputes as ‘metalinguistic’ in nature. Sundell (2011), for instance, takes certain sorts of disputes that look like they turn on idiosyncratic truth assessment as disputes over the setting of contextual parameters in conversation; Barker (2013) applies a similar method to disputes involving ‘taste predicates,’ and tracks conversational commitments governing the use of expressions with a ‘discourse’ parameter in the semantics. It should be clear from above that the linguistic flavor of resolving weak subjectivity is not a matter of values set by conversational contexts at all, but tracks stable cross-contextual commitments in the attitudes of speakers. It is also misleading to call such differences in truth assessment that are tracked only by differing linguistic behaviors ‘metalinguistic,’ as Plunkett & Sundell (2013) refer to disagreements of a similar nature, as the issue is not with disagreements over the meanings of expressions per se – rather, the compositional semantics itself includes as an important part of words’ meanings sensitivity to the fact that they allow for a range of idiosyncratic assessment, which sometimes has only linguistic reflexes. Kokureck et al. (2020) introduce a ‘convention’ parameter into the compositional semantics, which plays a role in some ways similar to that of the perspectives used here, but this parameter is given an explicitly linguistic gloss. On the present approach, there is nothing intrinsically linguistic about perspectives at all, and the linguistic flavor of weak subjectivity arises only in the presence of independent pragmatic principles governing speech acts.

18 It’s a delicate matter which sorts of beliefs can be attributed to animals. The example I use here I take to be fairly uncontentious, and acceptable to speakers.
*squirrel* requires linguistic dispositions that Alphonse cannot have, it follows that Alphonse’s
doxastic state must admit all perspectives compatible with assessment of the predicate, since
his doxastic state cannot be any more refined than this (that would require a linguistic
competence). Hence, (29) reports the dog as having the descriptive commitment that the
referent of *it* is a squirrel, on any idiosyncratically acceptable interpretation of the predicate,
which is the correct interpretation.

Note also that there is a subtle difference in what (29) can mean when Alphonse is a
man with a linguistic competence, as opposed to a dog. In this case, the report is capable of
reporting Alphonse’s idiosyncratic ‘opinion’ on the referent of *it* as to whether it ‘counts’ as
a squirrel, where the application of *squirrel* leaves room for idiosyncratic truth assessment
tracked by linguistic behavior. This might happen if the animal in question is a rodent that
is only disputably a squirrel according to speakers (like a South African ground squirrel,
perhaps). The point is that while Alphonse can express an ‘opinion’ tracked by this attitude
report as to what ‘counts’ as a squirrel if he is a man, he cannot if he is a dog – then the
attitude report only tracks his descriptive commitments. Hence, the way weak subjectivity
is tracked by linguistic commitment only ‘activates’ for agents with a linguistic competence,
because only they are bound by pragmatic norms that make it so that their beliefs are
determined in part by their linguistic behavior.

Since strong subjectivity is not tracked by linguistic dispositions, but only by the descriptive
commitments that an agent has in relation to its own context of assessment, however,
strongly subjective interpretations do not differ based on whether the agent has a linguistic
competence. Thus, whether Alphonse is a dog or not, (28) attributes the same descriptive
commitment to him: *Alphonse thinks that licorice is tasty* requires Alphonse to take the
flavor of licorice to be pleasant according to his experiential dispositions, an attitude which
either a man or a dog can have, and to which linguistic competence is not relevant here. In
both cases, the principle in (27) governs the perspectives admitted into the doxastic state of
the agent accordingly.

Next, suppose that Alfonso is a monolingual speaker of Spanish: then (30) attributes to
Alfonso the normal descriptive commitments, along with the non-descriptive commitment
roughly to be willing to use any word that means the same as *athlete* for individuals like
Secretariat.

(30) Alfonso thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.

This will commit Alfonso to certain linguistic behavior, but only in a language he actually
has competence in (Spanish): hence, if *atleta* is synonymous with *athlete* (31), then he will
be expected to be willing to apply *atleta* to Secretariat. The reverse also holds for a Spanish
report, and Alphonse’s behavior in English, assuming that (32a) and (32b) are synonymous:
(32a) attributes to Alphonse, if he is a monolingual English speaker, the disposition to apply
*athlete* to individuals like Secretariat.

(31) \[[\text{atleta}]^{w,p} = \lambda x.e.\text{athlete}'(p)(w)(x)\]

(32) a. Alphonse cree que Secretariat es un atleta.
    b. Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.
If either Alphonse or Alfonso were to become bilingual, then their linguistic commitments would appropriately expand, so that their thinking that Secretariat is an athlete would commit them to be willing to apply both *athlete* and *atleta* to him. Hence, the resolution of weak subjectivity is tracked roughly by willingness to use expressions that mean a certain thing, in whatever languages one has mastered.

7 Existence and unity of the perspective parameter

The foregoing has included two substantive claims about the perspective parameter. The first is that this parameter is distinct from the world parameter, and so performs a distinct role in the compositional semantics. The second is that linguistic subjectivity can behave in two broad ways, which I have termed weak subjectivity and strong subjectivity, but that the very same perspective parameter is responsible for both of these. The purpose of this section is to bolster these two claims with some additional considerations, by arguing: (i) that the compositional semantics must be able to target the perspective of evaluation to the exclusion of the world of evaluation, meaning that the former exists as a distinct parameter; and (ii) that those operators which plausibly operate on the perspective parameter indiscriminately target weak and strong subjectivity, meaning that the same parameter governs both, so that subjectivity is unified in the compositional semantics.

In the foregoing I’ve made use of the relativists’ perspective parameter to account for the way that the compositional semantics of attitude reports is sensitive to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment of the believing agent. However, as noted in Section 4, a vanilla doxastic verb like *think* indiscriminately manipulates both the world and perspective parameter, and therefore does not distinguish between their compositional roles. From the above, it is therefore not clear that the world and perspective parameters actually play distinct compositional roles. One might just as easily fold them together into a single parameter that governs all assessment for truth, and then the semantics for *think* might be as follows, writing ‘\(i\)’ to stand for a neutral ‘index’ of evaluation, and taking propositions to be functions from type-\(s\) indices to truth values.

\[
[\text{think}]^i = \lambda \phi_{st}. \lambda x_e. \forall i' \in \text{Dox}_x.w [\phi(i')]
\]

The idea is that \(i\) would be a single parameter of evaluation that performs the combined role of the world and perspective of evaluation, and which determines the extensions of expressions by fixing all relevant matters governing truth assessment. On such a picture, an agent’s doxastic alternatives would be the set of indices compatible with that agent’s belief state, which would be determined simultaneously by commitments as to how the world is, as well as patterns of truth assessment not sensitive to the world-state. Predicates like *athlete*.

\(^{19}\)Such treatments, with a single parameter richer than a world that evaluates extensions (including truth values) related to ‘factual’ and ‘non-factual’ matters simultaneously, has been adopted previously in both relativist semantics and related alternatives: cf. Kölbl’s (2002) notion of a perspective, and Coppock’s (2018) notion of an ‘outlook.’ In Coppock’s case, it is not clear to what extent the parameter is actually unified, as her semantics of subjective attitude verbs requires appealing both to worlds and outlooks as refinements of worlds, and it is not obvious whether this is not a notational variant of a semantics with two genuinely distinct parameters of evaluation.
and *tasty* could then be rewritten to be sensitive to the index alone, as opposed to both a world and perspective, with the relevant principles governing strong subjectivity restricting which indices agents can admit in their doxastic alternatives as follows.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(34) } & \quad \text{a. } [\text{athlete}]^i = \lambda x_e.\text{athlete}'(i)(x) \\
          & \quad \text{b. } [\text{tasty}]^i = \lambda x_e.\text{tasty}'(i)(x) \\
          & \quad \text{c. For any agent } x \text{ and world } w: \\
              & \quad \quad \text{For all } i \in \text{Dox}_{x,w}, \text{ tasty}'(i) = \lambda y_e.\text{gus}''(i)(x)(y)
\end{align*}
\]

On such a picture, it might well be that some of agents’ truth assessment patterns track states of the world across the speaker population, and other such patterns merely track linguistic dispositions, or track features of the idiosyncratic context of assessment. We as theorists might very well want to distinguish between these functions, and represent them in our denotations for perspicuity. Speakers themselves also might be metalinguistically aware of these facts to some extent. The compositional semantics would be strictly blind to all this, however: subjectivity would appear only as a kind of interactional effect between the compositional semantics and the states of speakers in relation to the world. Neutral operators like *think* would simply manipulate the index of evaluation, and have no access to distinct world and perspective parameters.

A positive case for the separate existences of the world and perspective parameters can be made by showing that one is visible to the compositional semantics to the exclusion of the other for some semantic operation. For instance, MacFarlane (2014: §7.2.11) makes such a claim about alethic modals, that they operate on the world parameter to the exclusion of (his equivalent of) the perspective. A more direct case for the separate existence of the perspective parameter in particular would adduce an intensional operator that targets the perspective as distinct from the world. I offer two such operators here: the English subjective attitude verb *consider*, and prepositional phrases that place an agent in a *dativus iudicantis* role.

Subjective attitude verbs are a class of attitude verbs that, like their non-subjective counterparts, place a commitment on their subjects with respect to the evaluation of the content of a complement clause. What makes these attitude verbs ‘subjective’ is roughly that the commitment placed on the subject is somehow sensitive to the idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns of that subject, suggesting that the attitude is held in a way that is contingent on those idiosyncratic patterns. Subjective attitude verbs have attracted some attention from semanticists, especially as diagnostics of linguistic subjectivity, or operators targeting features that track subjectivity in the compositional semantics (cf. Sæbø 2009, Kennedy & Willer 2016, Coppock 2018, Vardomskaya 2018). Our knowledge of subjective attitude verbs as a semantic class remains highly cursory, and here I just examine the English verb *consider*.

*Consider* has a somewhat complex distribution in English (cf. Lasersohn 2009: 365 ff., Kennedy & Willer 2016): here I focus just on some of its characteristic semantic behaviors when it embeds a small clause, with either a noun or adjective in predicate position. The basic observation about the semantics of *consider* is that it commits its subject to belief in the content of its complement clause, but in a more restrictive way than the vanilla doxastic verb *think* does. In particular, it roughly requires that given the agent’s descriptive belief
state, that agent ‘could have’ assessed that same content as either true or false, given the adoption of distinct idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment.

(35)  
   a. Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete.
   b. Alphonse considers Secretariat an athlete.

(35b) entails (35a), but the latter further requires that Alphonse’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, over and above his descriptive commitments, are responsible for his belief. That is, the consider-report has the flavor of requiring that Alphonse thinks that Secretariat is an athlete because he has doxastically resolved the weak subjectivity involved in the predicate athlete, and that he could have resolved it the other way, and considered Secretariat not to be an athlete, even given his same descriptive commitments. If Alphonse’s descriptive commitments are determined in such a way that no adoption of an idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment over and above them would make a difference as to whether he thinks that Secretariat is an athlete, then (35b) becomes odd. It is strange as a report, for example, if Alphonse thinks Secretariat is an athlete because he mistakenly thinks that Secretariat is a human competitor that would canonically count as an athlete regardless of the perspectives he admitted.

The attitude report Alphonse considers Secretariat an athlete is typically felicitous, since the weak subjectivity governing the assessment of athlete makes it so that to decide whether Secretariat is an athlete typically requires an idiosyncratic pattern of truth assessment over and above an agent’s descriptive commitments. One’s belief that Secretariat is (or isn’t) an athlete therefore usually depends on the resolution of this subjectivity. And consider-reports in general tend toward felicity or infelicity ‘out of the blue,’ depending on how plausible it is that the adoption of the relevant belief depends on the adoption of such idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in this way.

(36)  
   a. Alphonse considers Usain Bolt an athlete.
   b. Alphonse considers Bethany tall.
   c. Alphonse considers Bethany six feet tall.

(36a) is slightly odd, since Usain Bolt is a more canonical athlete than Secretariat: it is therefore unclear what idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment an agent could adopt that would be relevant to deciding a belief as to whether he is an athlete. (36c) is even odder, as the complement clause contains no expression at all that, like athlete, typically introduces such a large role for weak subjectivity in the compositional semantics: it is typically unclear what idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment are relevant to deciding a belief as to whether an individual is six feet tall.

These infelicities are only default tendencies: both (36a) and (36c) can be made felicitous if some such decisive role is construed for idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, e.g. if it is questioned whether ‘true’ athletes must play team sports, so that sprinters might not count as athletes, or if Bethany is on the cusp of six feet tall, but technically only crosses that threshold with her shoes on. (36b), by contrast, is felicitous mostly independently of context, since one’s idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment are typically quite free in deciding how much height an individual has to have in order to be tall (even relative to a contextually
determined comparison class). One is therefore often free to think that Bethany is tall or not, even holding one’s descriptive commitments regarding her height fixed.

In short, the meaning of consider is sensitive specifically to idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment in a way that vanilla doxastic verbs are not, and this is plausibly because the verb targets the perspective parameter alone for a specific semantic function. We can capture this as follows: consider has the same at-issue contribution as a vanilla doxastic verb like think, but also introduces a presupposition to the effect that, holding fixed the subject’s descriptive commitments, there exist perspectives that both verify and falsify the content of the embedded clause relative to those descriptive commitments.

(37) \[ \text{consider}^{w,p} = \lambda \phi^w, \lambda \chi : \exists p'', p''' \forall \langle w', p' \rangle \in D\text{ox}_{x,w}[\phi(w', p'') \land \neg \phi(w', p''')] \].

An entry like (37) targets the perspective parameter specifically in its presuppositional content, listed on the first line of the denotation. If this is a plausible semantics for consider, then the perspective parameter must be independently accessible in the compositional semantics. This approach to consider shares the general spirit of several previous approaches to subjective attitudes: cf. Bouchard (2012: ch. 3), Kennedy & Willer (2016), and Coppock (2018), all of which treat subjective attitudes as introducing extra presuppositional content to vanilla doxastic commitments that make the truth or falsity of the believed content dependent on the setting of non-descriptive parameters in some way. The virtue of the present approach is to preserve this basic insight and further fold it into a general, deep-rooted feature of the compositional semantics implicated in the assessment of predicates in general, by casting it in terms of the perspective parameter.  

A final note on the treatment of consider here: it predicts that the felicity of an attitude report depends on the agent’s belief state resolving the subjectivity of the embedded clause in a way relevant to the formation of the belief. If this is true, and if as claimed in Section 6, the resolution of weak subjectivity requires a linguistic competence, then it should follow that consider-reports embedding weakly subjective clauses are bizarre when attributed to non-linguistic agents, like animals, who cannot have these sorts of attitudes. This is so: ?Alphonse considers it a squirrel is strange if Alphonse is a dog – but not if he’s a man that knows a language.  

20One crucial feature of Kennedy & Willer (2016) in particular that is left out of the present account is the relativization of the felicity conditions of subjective attitude verbs like consider to a context of utterance. This is likely independently desirable, to capture the sort of contextual variability as to whether consider-reports can be construed as felicitous, noted above in this section. On the present approach, this would involve stating principles like (25), which govern which perspectives are available to the grammar, not simpliciter, but relative to a context of utterance. When quantifying over perspectives in the compositional semantics, one would then always quantify not over the entire set of perspectives, but rather over a contextually relevant subset of these. This is easy to implement, but I leave it to the side here.

21There is a plausible reading of Alphonse considers it a squirrel that might be attributed to a dog, which
Another English construction that appears to target the perspective of evaluation specifically involves prepositional phrases, typically headed by to (and sometimes by for). These phrases place their object in the role of a dativus iudicantis, or the agent ‘relative to whom’ a certain predicate is to be evaluated. These dativus iudicantis phrases are highly limited in distribution, typically occurring only as modifiers to nouns or adjectives that lack internal arguments in predicative position, and being placed either after the predicate (39a) or preposed to some other position (39b).

(39) a. Secretariat is an athlete to Alphonse.
    b. To Alphonse, Secretariat is an athlete.

These phrases are less often discussed in the literature (though Richard 2008: 141, ex. D and Kocurek et al. 2020: 13, ex. 30c mention them, for instance). But their relevance for the perspective parameter is clear: they appear to act as property modifiers, which produce properties that are to be evaluated somehow relative to the perspectives admitted by the agent they introduce.

One way of treating the semantics of these expressions is simply to assimilate it to that of consider, but in the form of a property modifier, as follows. Indeed, as the reader can confirm, the felicity conditions on such phrases pattern fairly closely with that of consider-reports, making such an assimilation plausible.

(40) \[ [to]^{w,p} = \lambda x.e.\lambda P_{s,et}.\lambda y.e.\forall \langle w',p' \rangle \in Dox_{x,w}[P(w',p')(y) \land \neg P(w',p'')(y)]. \]

But there is in my judgment a subtle difference in truth conditions between the report in (35b) and those in (39). In particular, while the consider-report requires Alphonse to think that Secretariat is an athlete, the dativus iudicantis reports do not. That is, one might truthfully say (39a) if according to Alphonse’s standards for what an athlete is, Secretariat ‘counts’ as an athlete, even if Alphonse doesn’t think much of anything about Secretariat in particular. In other words, the dativus iudicantis is not doxastic: it reports not what the agent believes the subject to be, but what the subject actually is, according to the idiosyncratic truth assessment patterns admitted by the agent’s doxastic state. I admit that this is a subtle judgment, but if it is accepted, an appropriate semantics would instead be as follows.

(41) a. \[ [to]^{w,p} = \lambda x.e.\lambda P_{s,et}.\lambda y.e.\forall \langle w',p' \rangle \in Dox_{x,w}[P(w,p')(y)]. \]

involves interpreting the report as meaning ‘Alphonse treats it as a squirrel’ (i.e., he behaves as if it were a squirrel). Following Vardomskaya (2018: §4.7), I take this admissible use of consider to be distinct from the use considered in the text: it is eventive and non-doxastic, and here would have a habitual as opposed to a stative reading.

While the dativus iudicantis is the most grammaticized operator performing this function, similar comments could be made about periphrastic constructions like by Alphonse’s standards, etc.

The felicity conditions on the use of the dativus iudicantis would presumably then not be tracked by a presuppositional requirement on the agent’s doxastic state, but rather by whether or not the quantification over perspectives is semantically vacuous or not. Thus for instance, “Bethany is six feet tall to Alphonse” is odd because quantifying over Alphonse’s perspectives, or anyone else’s, typically has no semantic effect on the predicate it modifies.

31
b. \([\text{Secretariat is an athlete to Alphonse}]^{w,p}\)
   \[=
   \left(\left(\left[\text{to}\right]^{w,p}\left(\left[\text{Alphonse}]^{w,p}\right)\right)\left(\lambda\langle w', p'\rangle_s, [\text{athlete}]^{w', p'}\right)\right)(\left[\text{Secretariat}]^{w,p}\right)\right)
   = \forall\langle w', p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{athlete}'(p')(w)(s)]\]

Whichever of these treatments is right, we have another construction whose compositional semantics requires targeting the perspective of evaluation specifically, which is further evidence that the parameter exists separately in the semantics.

Having argued for the separate existence of the perspective parameter, we can now adduce evidence that this same parameter controls both strong and weak subjectivity, so that in the compositional semantics, the phenomena are unified. The basic idea is that constructions like consider-reports and dativus iudicantis prepositional phrases, which according to the above plausibly target the perspective parameter, do so whether the construction in question is governed by weak or strong subjectivity, and the result is predictable either way, based on which sort of subjectivity is at play. The compositional semantics therefore contains a single perspective parameter that it operates on indiscriminately, and it is only the presence or absence of further pragmatic principles governing which perspectives an agent may admit into their doxastic state that categorize the subjectivity in question as weak or strong.

For consider-reports, the point is fairly simple: the felicity conditions on the report are the same whether the predication that consider embeds is governed by weak or strong subjectivity. We’ve seen examples of weakly subjective predications using small clauses like Secretariat an athlete above, but such reports are also felicitous with clauses like licorice tasty. The truth conditions for such a report are as follows.

\[(42)\]

\[a.\] Alphonse considers licorice tasty.

\[b.\] \([\text{Alphonse considers licorice tasty}]^{w,p}\)
   \[= \forall\langle w', p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{tasty}'(p')(w')(l)]\]
   \[= \forall\langle w', p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{gus}''(w')(a)(l)],\]
   \[\text{if } \exists p'', p'''\forall\langle w', p'\rangle \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[\text{tasty}'(p''')(w')(l) \land \neg\text{tasty}'(p''')(w')(l)]]; \]
   \[\text{else undefined}\]

There are two points to be made about the felicity conditions of the report in (42a). The first is just that the report is actually felicitous here. This would be mysterious if the semantics given in (37) above were on the right track, but the predicate tasty were not sensitive to the very same perspective parameter it targets. The same conditions that make one predication felicitous make the other felicitous as well, which we make sense of if the weak subjectivity of athlete and the strong subjectivity of tasty are both governed by the parameter that consider targets. This makes Alphonse’s belief as to whether licorice is tasty crucially contingent on the perspectives that he admits, which in turn track his experiential dispositions. This perspective-contingency in turn correctly implies that the belief that licorice is tasty is one that licenses consider.

The second point to make is that reports like Alphonse considers licorice tasty are almost always felicitous, regardless of context. This makes sense given the semantics above for consider, if there simply needs to be some perspective that verifies the r-proposition that licorice is tasty, and some perspective that falsifies it, given the agent’s descriptive commitments. Simply select a perspective that would be admitted by an experiencer that would like whatever flavor Alphonse takes licorice to have, and another that would be admitted
by an experiencer that wouldn’t like it (such perspectives should always be available, as
the grammar is capable of tracking any sort of experiential disposition to like or dislike
licorice in principle). This near-universal felicity makes consider-reports of such taste pred-
ications hard to distinguish from the corresponding think-reports truth-conditionally, since
the presupposition tends to be trivially met. This looks to be the right result.

For dativus iudicantis phrases, the point to be made is more controversial, as it requires
construing certain phrases that can co-occur with adjectives like tasty as dativus iudicantis
phrases. To-headed prepositional phrases do indeed occur alongside predicates like tasty in
predicative position, either following the adjective or preposed, as usual.

(43) a. Licorice is tasty to Alphonse.
b. To Alphonse, licorice is tasty.

The issue is that the status of phrases like to Alphonse in these examples has been
controversial for some time. Some authors have explicitly proposed that such phrases are
not adjunctive modifiers to the predicate, but occur as internal arguments to it, meaning
that adjectives like tasty are actually dyadic: cf. Glanzberg (2007: 11-12, fn. 9), Stephenson
(2007a: §7.1), and Snyder (2013), and Schaffer (2011) for a more sustained argument to
this effect. Meanwhile, other authors (cf. Lasersohn 2005: 666, MacFarlane 2014: §7.2.5)
have proposed a modificational semantics for these phrases, which is more natural on a
treatment of such phrases as adjuncts to the adjective, and which is more compatible with
their assimilation to the dativus iudicantis.\footnote{Historically, this split has tended to pattern along the contextualist/relativist metasemantic split, with contextualists preferring the argument treatment for the PPs, and relativists at least implying that they prefer the adjunctive treatment. But this is just an accident: as the treatment in Stephenson (2007a) shows, the question of whether predicates like tasty have an internal argument is orthogonal to the issue of whether to give them a contextualist or relativist metasemantics.}

One therefore has to be careful about marshaling examples like those in (43), to argue
that they show that dativus iudicantis phrases, which plausibly target the perspective of
evaluation, have the same semantic function whether the predicate is governed by weak or
strong subjectivity – this is because many will not agree that the prepositional phrases in
these examples are instances of the dativus iudicantis to begin with, but think instead that
they simply represent overt expressions of arguments to the predicate.

My own view on this matter is that: (i) sufficient syntactic considerations have not been
brought to bear on this issue, and so it strictly speaking remains undecided, and in any case
the matter may be subject to cross-linguistic variation or variation across predicates; but
that (ii) insofar as syntactic concerns have been brought to bear on the topic, the evidence
points in favor of an adjunctive analysis of these phrases, and against an argument analysis
(cf. Collins 2013 for a sustained argument to this effect, and a rebuttal against earlier
claims to the contrary). The basic distribution of these phrases is classically adjunctive, as
suggested even by the superficial fact that they can be preposed. And so while I recognize
the issue to be open, my own sympathies lie (in the English case, with predicates like tasty)
with the claim that these prepositional phrases are modifiers. And as Richard (2008: 141)
points out, if one accepts this much, it is difficult to see why cases like those in (43) should
not be assimilated to cases like those in (39): that is, they both look like instances of the
same phenomenon of dativus iudicantis.
If one accepts all of this, then the point is clear: the examples in (43) show that dativus iudicantis phrases are felicitous in exactly the cases expected with perspective-sensitive expressions, even when those expressions are governed by strong subjectivity, again showing that these expressions seem to target the same parameter in either case.

If one assimilates the semantics of to that of consider, then the points made here are again parallel to the ones made about consider-reports. I believe, however, that the semantics of (41a) is more plausible in general, and here delivers the better result as well: Licorice is tasty to Alphonse does not necessarily describe a belief of Alphonse’s, but rather states a fact about the taste of licorice – that according to the perspectives that Alphonse’s doxastic state admits, its taste tends to be pleasant. This can be shown as follows.

(44) \[
[[\text{Licorice is tasty to Alphonse}]_{w,p}] = [[[\text{to}]_{w,p}([^\text{Alphonse}]_{w,p})](\lambda w'p'.[^\text{tasty}]_{w',p'})([^\text{licorice}]_{w,p})] = \forall (w',p') \in \text{Dox}_{a,w}[[\text{tasty}'](p')(w)(l)] = gus''_a(w)(a)(l)
\]

Since Alphonse’s perspectives are governed by strong subjectivity in determining what he treats as tasty, the truth conditions in (44) essentially force an experiential reading of the dativus iudicantis, because the relevant strong subjectivity is keyed into the agent’s experiential reactions. What (44) says is that Alphonse is disposed to like the taste of licorice, which is exactly what the examples in (43) mean.

And so the compositional semantics simply targets the perspective parameter, but whether the operators that do so have the resulting weak or strong readings falls out automatically from this fact.

And so we see that, given some plausible assumptions, there are examples of English constructions that target the perspective parameter explicitly, and that they do so regardless of whether the perspective is governed by weak or strong subjectivity, giving the expected compositional result in either case. I conclude that there is good reason to believe in the separate existence of the relativists' perspective parameter, and that its previous application to strongly subjective matters is compositionally unified with the new application provided here to weakly subjective matters.

**8 Conclusion**

In the foregoing, I’ve suggested that the intensional parameter used in relativist semantics has a far wider grammatical application than has been previously thought, and is implicated in the interpretation of lexical content generally, not just the interpretation of a special class of apparently ‘subjective’ or ‘assessment-sensitive’ expressions. If this is right, then the tools of relativist semantics are applicable to phenomena that appear throughout the compositional semantics.

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25 There is one further complication here that the present account doesn’t address: Licorice is tasty to Alphonse also tends to presuppose that Alphonse has actually tasted licorice, not just that he is disposed to like its taste. This presumably has to do with the experiential semantics of tasty and the way actual experience is presupposed only when a specific experiencer is introduced into the semantic content. I leave this issue to the side here.
The main import of this result is that linguistic subjectivity, in the sense of sensitivity to agents’ idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment, is a deeply grammaticized phenomenon. It is not something that concerns only a special class of expressions, nor is it something that operates only at the grammatical periphery, concerning metalinguistic or contextual standards for the interpretation of lexical material in context. It is rather a core component of truth assessment that is represented in the content of clauses generally, and which must be visible to the compositional semantics.

I’ve further suggested that linguistic subjectivity has a specific structure in the semantics: it concerns sensitivity to an intensional parameter, and internal to this sensitivity, there is a distinction between contents that ‘force’ agents to adopt attitudes that track descriptive features their own context of assessment, and so exhibit what I’ve called strong subjectivity, and contents that make no such further requirements, and so exhibit what I’ve called weak subjectivity. This recalls several past studies that have noted a similar sort of split between two notions of subjectivity, e.g. in Lasersohn (2008), Fleisher (2013), and Kennedy (2013), but also situates these two notions with respect to one another, embeds them deeply in the compositional semantics, and folds them into a broader relativist framework.

This picture opens up a number of possibilities going forward. It suggests, for instance, that strong subjectivity is a substantive grammatical phenomenon, while weak subjectivity is not, the latter merely being subjectivity that lacks any ‘strong’ restrictions. This may predict what types of subjectivity that it is possible for the grammar to target. In Section 7, I argued that there are operators that target subjectivity more generally; but it may be, for instance, that there are operators that target strong subjectivity specifically, while there are no operators that target weak subjectivity specifically, the latter not being a distinct phenomenon visible to the grammar as apart from subjectivity generally. It would be interesting to see whether this bears out cross-linguistically in the interpretation of operators like subjective attitude verbs.

Another advantage of the present treatment is that it offers a way of specifying exactly where in the compositional semantics subjectivity originates. This is because there is a clear criterion for its appearance – sensitivity to the perspective parameter. It further allows that subjectivity may be introduced in complex expressions in multiple places, and in multiple ways: some of that subjectivity may be weak, and some of it may be strong, so that a single complex expression may be sensitive to both simultaneously, possibly from different

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26Several authors (cf. Sæbø 2009; Bouchard 2012: ch. 3; Hirvonen 2014: ch. 4; Kennedy & Willer 2016; Vardomskaya 2018: ch. 4) have made comments on the English subjective attitude verb find, whose puzzling semantics are difficult to pin down. I am tempted, though not quite convinced, by the idea that find targets strong subjectivity specifically: if this is so, then something like Alphonse finds licorice tasty would be interpreted to mean that according to the perspectives that Alphonse is obliged to adopt for strongly subjective reasons, the flavor of licorice is actually pleasant, and so on. This way of thinking of things has an affinity with the treatment in Kennedy & Willer (2016), who take find to target ‘radical counterstance contingency,’ a notion which intriguingly is more stringent than their notion of ‘counterstance contingency’ more generally (which is targeted by subjective attitude verbs more generally), similar to how strong subjectivity is more stringent than subjectivity more generally on the present approach. It may be that the same phenomenon is being approached here from two angles. This relation between subjectivity and strong subjectivity may also be relevant for other verbs, like Swedish tycka as discussed by Coppock (2018). Here there are some intriguing results to sift through: for instance, if tycka is sensitive to strong subjectivity, but does not embed epistemic modals, this may be a sign that the purported subjectivity assigned to these modals is of a different sort than that explored here (or is misattributed).
compositional sources.

It’s worth demonstrating this briefly before closing, to give the idea. In Section 6, a denotation was given for *tasty*, along with a principle governing the interpretation of the sensitivity to the perspective parameter it introduced. This allowed for a specification of how *tasty* is strongly subjective, such that it must be assessed relative to the experiential dispositions of the assessor. But this is a massive simplification of the actual range and complexity of subjectivity that *tasty* expresses. This is for two reasons: first, while *tasty* does exhibit strong subjectivity, it actually also exhibits multiple kinds of weak subjectivity as well, in contexts like *Licorice is tasty*. This weak subjectivity has to do with factors other than how to set the experiential standard of assessment. Second, the strong subjectivity of *tasty* may not be something intrinsic to the core lexical semantics of the predicate, but rather something that appears only in certain grammatical environments (like in the sorts of plain predications examined here).

As to the weak subjectivity that *tasty* exhibits: it is first of all a gradable adjective, and assuming that its scale is open, it is a relative adjective as well, meaning that in positive form it is sensitive to a standard governing a cutoff point along a dimension, which determines how tasty something has to be to be tasty (cf. Glanzberg 2007). This is a kind of subjectivity that *tasty* shares with other relative gradable adjectives in positive form, including non-experiential adjectives that lack its special form of strong subjectivity.

Second of all, when *tasty* is used as an individual-level predicate in ordinary predications, it has a generic reading: in *Licorice is tasty*, the property of generally producing gustatory pleasure in the appropriate circumstances is predicated of licorice (cf. Pearson 2013, Snyder 2013, Anthony 2016). This genericity raises issues of how reliable the production of this gustatory pleasure has to be, or under what ‘normal’ or frequent conditions it must arise. Every assessment of a generic predicate involves decisions on the part of the assessor as to which situations fulfill the relevant generic ‘felicity conditions’ (cf. Chierchia 1995), governing which situations are to ‘count’ as relevant to its truth conditions, and it’s no different with *tasty* (perhaps it’s not mark against licorice being tasty if it doesn’t taste good after brushing your teeth, for example).

These varieties of weak subjectivity therefore result from more general grammatical properties: in the case of the subjectivity governing the cutoff point, it results from from degree morphology interacting with the scale structure introduced by the root of the adjective (cf. Kennedy & McNally 2005), and in the case of the subjectivity governing the generic felicity conditions, it results from the generic quantification introduced by the individual-level predication. This means (i) that these forms of subjectivity are shared with any other expression that makes use of similar semantic mechanisms, and (ii) that insofar as the expression in-

27 It is actually not entirely clear from the literature whether *tasty* really is a relative adjective: at least, this has not been explicitly argued for to my knowledge. But as several authors assume this, I do here as well for illustration. I ignore comparison classes, which gradable adjectives also introduce, for the purposes of the present discussion.

28 Actually, there is yet a third kind of weak subjectivity that *tasty* exhibits, though it is more subtle. Even fixing an experiencer, a relevant cutoff point, and a set of standards for the felicity conditions of the generic, it may be a matter of idiosyncratic assessment how ‘pleasant’ a particular gustatory experience actually is: this becomes relevant when a flavor is strange, complex, or difficult to evaluate. This sort of subjectivity is more marginal, and plausibly is encoded within the core of the adjective itself: I leave it aside for simplicity.
troduces these semantic mechanisms at some specific place in the compositional semantics, the subjectivity is introduced in that place in the compositional semantics as well. This has predictable consequences: for instance, the subjectivity governing the cutoff disappears in comparative constructions, as Kennedy (2013) notes (45a), while the subjectivity governing the genericity disappears in perfective or stage-level readings of tasty that involve specific episodes of gustatory pleasure (45b).

(45)  a. Licorice is tastier than marzipan.
     b. I had some licorice yesterday. It was tasty.

On the present treatment, we can trace the introduction of these two kinds of weak subjectivity in the compositional semantics, by tracing the different places in the semantics at which the perspective parameter appears, and the different role it plays in each case. If, for instance, we were to compose the use of tasty in a simple predication like Licorice is tasty, which is both positive-form and generic, then we might do this with a silent positive degree morpheme pos (cf. Kennedy 2007 a.o.), and with a generic operator gen (cf. Pearson 2013 a.o.). It would be these operators, and not the adjectival root of tasty, that vary on the perspective parameter, and so introduce the relevant weak subjectivity.

A brief illustration may be in order; the basic approach represented here is of course compatible with a number of specific treatments. Let the extensions of expressions be evaluated relative to a world w, perspective p, and assignment g, and let intensions of expressions be functions from world-perspective-assignment triples to their extensions at those values. The adjectival root of tasty (46a) can then be a measure function, mapping an individual to a degree of gustatory pleasure: we say that $gus_\delta^\prime(w)(g(\epsilon))(x)$ is the degree of tastiness that $x$ produces in $g(\epsilon)$ in $w$, where ‘$\epsilon$’ is a distinguished experiencer variable, and $g(\epsilon)$ is the relevant experiencer chosen by the assignment. Note that there is no sensitivity to the perspective of evaluation in this denotation.

pos (46b) and gen (46c) the introduce perspective-sensitivity, and so weak subjectivity. pos composes with a measure function, to yield a property true of individuals whose degree according to that function surpasses a certain threshold. This threshold is itself determined by the standard function $\mathbf{s}$ relative to the perspective of evaluation, such that $\mathbf{s}(p)(G)$ is the degree on the scale associated with $G$ that an individual must reach, according to $p$, in order to count as satisfying the adjective. $\mathbf{s}$ is sensitive to $p$ in this way, because assessors are fairly free to set this standard according to their idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment. gen then composes with a property, and modifies it by introducing generic quantification: it does this by universally quantifying over all elements in the set $\mathcal{E}(w)(p)$, which includes those elements that are ‘generically accessible’ in $w$ according to the perspective $p$. Thus, a second kind of weak subjectivity is introduced, since the assessor is fairly free to decide which such elements are relevant to satisfy the felicity conditions of the generic.

(46)  a. $[\text{tasty}]^{w,p,g} = \lambda x.\mathbf{gus}_\delta^\prime(w)(g(\epsilon))(x)$
     b. $[\text{pos}]^{w,p,g} = \lambda G.\mathbf{s}_{s,ed}.\lambda x.\mathbf{G}(w,p,g)(x) \succeq \mathbf{s}(p)(G)$

---

Some treatments of the predicate would have the experiencer variable introduced by an internal argument, instead of by the adjectival root: this is perfectly possible, but I note in Section 7 why I don’t favor such an approach. The adjective itself may also decompose into taste and the adjectival -y.
Composing \( \text{Licorice is tasty} \) then yields the following result, abbreviating the intension of \( \text{tasty} \) as ‘...’ on the right side of the final line for brevity. What (47) says is that \( \text{Licorice is tasty} \) is true just in case for all worlds and assignments that are generically relevant according to the perspective, the degree of gustatory pleasure produced by licorice in the experiencer of that assignment in that world exceeds the relevant standard of tastiness according to the perspective.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(47)} & \quad \text{[Licorice is tasty]}^{w,p,g} \\
& = \text{[GEN]}^{w,p,g} (\lambda \langle w', p', g' \rangle_s, [\text{POS}]^{w', p', g'} (\lambda \langle w'', p'', g'' \rangle_s, [\text{tasty}]^{w'', p'', g''}))(\text{licorice}^{w,p,g}) \\
& = \forall w', g' \in \mathcal{D}(w)(p)[\text{gus}^s_{\varepsilon}(w')(g'(\varepsilon))(l) \geq s(p)(...)]
\end{align*}
\]

What about the strong subjectivity involved in \( \text{Licorice is tasty} \), then, which presumably requires assessors to take the relevant experiencer to be themselves? Since the experiencer is introduced with the adjectival root (46a), one might be tempted to lay the strong subjectivity here, using a principle stating that assessors must always treat the value of the experiencer variable \( \varepsilon \) as themselves, for example. This is a plausible idea, but strong subjectivity requires sensitivity to the perspective parameter, and we already have two invocations of the perspective, which might introduce strong interpretations in their own right, so we might wonder if one of these is responsible. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that strong subjectivity is not intrinsic to the interpretation of the root of \( \text{tasty} \) after all, but is derived from one of these other sources.

In particular, the authors cited above, who emphasize the generic flavor of \( \text{tasty} \) when used in individual-level predication, have suggested that the subjectivity effects accompanying the predicate only arise where it receives a generic reading that does not encode a specific experiencer. This is quite plausible: perfective or eventive readings like in (45b) do not seem to have strongly subjective interpretations, but are simply true or false depending on whether gustatory pleasure was actually produced, in whatever experiencer is relevant or participated in the reported event. If a specific experiencer is specified in the content of the predication, as in ‘exocentric’ readings, or where a \( \text{dativus iudicantis} \) appears, the strong subjectivity effects of course also disappear.

If this is right, then it suggests that it is actually the generic quantifier (here introduced by \text{GEN}) that is responsible for the strong subjectivity as well. If this is so, then the relevant principle governing that strong subjectivity is that generic quantification over experiencers requires assessors to treat themselves as the only relevant experiencer that fulfils the felicity conditions of the generic. That is, we would have a principle like this to round out how the subjectivity works in (47).\(^{30}\)

\[
(48) \quad \text{For any agent } x \text{ world } w, \text{ and assignment } g: \\
\text{For all } \langle w', p \rangle \in \text{Dox}_{x,w}: \text{if } g \in \mathcal{D}(w')(p), \text{ then } g(\varepsilon) = x
\]\n
\(^{30}\)This treatment would probably not be endorsed by Pearson, Snyder, or Anthony: I adopt their insights here to a relativist treatment instead. Snyder (\textit{ibid.} 303 ff.) does briefly consider relativizing the modal bases he uses in generic quantification to a judge parameter, however, which is hints at the approach outlined here.
What (48) says is that the only assignments that are permissible in deciding the felicity conditions of a generic, according to the perspectives admitted by an agent, are those that take the value of $\epsilon$ (and so the experiencer) to be that agent itself. This effectively means that agents are compelled to assess generic claims about certain sorts of experiential predicates as true not when the relevant stimuli generically tend to produce that sort of experience in experiencers generally, but when the relevant stimuli generically tend to produce that sort of experience in the agent itself.

In other words, being tasty generically ‘simpliciter’ tracks being tasty generically to oneself, as far as the idiosyncratic patterns of truth assessment are concerned. This means that the generic quantifier introduces both strong and weak subjectivity: to fix the experiencer variable to oneself only partially resolves the felicity conditions of the generic, since the fixing of the world remains an open problem, subject to weak subjectivity. This is just what we see: in evaluating the truth of Licorice is tasty, agents are typically ‘forced’ to so relative to themselves as experiencer, but even relative to oneself, how to resolve the felicity conditions of the generic remains open – what conditions of that agent’s tasting the licorice ‘count’ for its satisfaction?

While I don’t mean to endorse this specific approach to the composition of the predicate, it does serve as an example of how the present approach can disentangle distinct notions of subjectivity, show how they are introduced separately throughout the compositional semantics, and demonstrate that they show a complex hybrid behavior that is the result of multiple formal properties interacting in the compositional semantics. If the above link between genericity and strong subjectivity of predicates like tasty is right, then it suggests that tasty’s assessment-sensitivity is not hard-coded into its lexical semantics, but is rather the result of the interaction between genericity and experiential semantics. It is therefore not an arbitrary feature of a quirky lexical item, but arises from deeper principles in the grammar. There still remains the question of why generic quantification over experiencers should be anchored to oneself in this way, but this is a principled question that may receive an illuminating answer.

This is the program that I suggest moving forward in the study of linguistic subjectivity: discover where and in what way subjectivity arises decompositionally, by tracing sensitivity to the perspective, and further determine where this perspective-sensitivity is governed by principles that determine what perspectives an agent can permissibly adopt. It is a deeper question why subjectivity should appear grammatically in some places and not others, and what the functional or cognitive motivation for such subjectivity might be (especially of the strong variety: here MacFarlane 2014: ch. 12 and Lasersohn 2017: ch. 11 offer some speculations). A relativist semantics, suitably expanded, gives us the appropriate formal apparatus to make such a project intelligible, but its substantive content remains largely to be seen.

References


