Predicates of Personal Taste: Relativism, Contextualism or Pluralism?

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The paper addresses issues of predicates of taste, both gustatory and aesthetic in dialogue with Michael Glanzberg. The first part briefly discusses his view of anaphora in the determination of the semantics of such predicates, and attempts a friendly generalization of his strategy. The second part discusses his contextualism about statements of taste, of the form A is Φ, and then proposes a pluralist alternative. The literature normally confronts contextualism and relativism here, but the pluralist proposal introduces further options. First, it distinguishes first-level and second-level, more theoretical, approaches. At the first level it introduces the naïve view option, the naive non-dogmatist experiencer who simply claims that A is Φ and that's it. On meta-level such an experiencer is simply agnostic about further matters. Then, there is the first-level dogmatist stance, characteristic for people who do sincerely debate the issues, who naively believe they are objectively right. The third option is the tolerant, liberal one: "A is Φ; for me, I mean. How do you find it?" On the meta-level, dogmatic disagreement goes well with value-absolutism, entailing that one of the parties is simply wrong, and with relativism. If one is not dogmatist about taste predicates, one should accept that dogmatist is simply wrong; no faultlessness is present. The liberal stance goes well with contextualism. If one is liberal there is no deep disagreement. So, the idea of faultless disagreement is a myth. But the proposal notes that language is open to all possibilities, there is no single option that is obligatory for all speakers.

Keywords: Predicates of taste, relativism, contextualism, pluralism.

1. Introduction

"Chocolate is tasty", "Rollercoasters are fun"; such seemingly simple sentences and judgments have become a widely discussed topic in phi-

losophy of language, of art and elsewhere. These will be our topic in this paper; I hasten to add judgment of aesthetic or artistic taste, like "Matisse is better than Picasso," (see Young 2017: 108). Some authors talk about "sentences expressing subjective judgment" (Lasersohn 2017: 1), and then list judgment of taste (…is fun, …is tasty…), and other judgments expressing evaluation (…is good, …is beautiful). We shall focus on judgments of taste, both gustatory and slightly more general, let us call it "hedonic" (…is fun), and then apply the idea to the aesthetic taste and to aesthetic judgments.[1]

Glanzberg's theoretical ambition is to offer a unitary truth-theoretic semantics for such judgments. He opts for one approach, the contextualist one, rejecting relativism and other alternatives. I must note at the very beginning my debt to Glanzberg. I shall discuss his brilliantly defended proposal, and then propose an alternative, indeed a pluralist one, claiming that the sentences in question can, and often do, express different judgments in the mouths of different person. A child might claim that "chocolate is tasty" and that "rollercoasters are fun", period, finding others who disagree simply not worth of attention. But n the course of time the child might learn that others she cares about have opposite opinions, and realize that, well, chocolate is tasty-for-him-and his likes. I shall argue that she is thereby learning both about the world and the language.

So, here is the preview. The rest of the present section introduces the taste predicates, and also a related notion of response-dependence. Then we turn to questions inspired by Glanzberg. Section two follows Glanzberg applying the semantics-pragmatics distinction. We take over his analysis of anaphora, as the symptomatic mechanism that guides the constitution of taste-related meanings and their understanding. Then we very briefly, with apologies, attempt to widen the model to other possible uses of anaphora, as a guidance from syntax-cum-semantics to issues of reference (and truth-conditions) determining in the context. Anaphora enables us to widen the semantic foundations for such determining, against extreme pragmaticist, who would make it completely pragmatic. Section three turns to Glanzberg's contextualism about predicates of personal taste. I find it to be a correct description of one possible attitude connected with taste, but I think there is no reason to be dogmatic about there being a single correct attitude. So, in the next to last section I turn to the pluralist alternative, trying to integrate the main options from the literature, and offer additional characterization, ending thus with six characterization, that can be mutually combined to yield more precise description of how individuals use and understand predicates of personal taste. I also briefly indicate how the theory might be extended to issues of taste that go beyond gustatory and hedonic taste, for instance in the direction of artistic-aesthetic taste. The whole spectrum of options is again summarized in the Conclusion.

Let us start with elementary mattes. Following Glanzberg we shall concentrate on predicates having to with gustatory taste (The food in restaurant *Orhan* in Dubrovnik is tasty.), and with a wider area that might be called "hedonic taste", exemplified by adjectives such as "fun" (Reading Glanzberg is fun). Also following Glanzberg, we shall talk of parameters, semantic and pragmatic, stressing the parameter of experiencer (the reader who finds reading fun) or judge (a third person who judges that reading Glanzberg is fun). Glanzberg is more into stressing the role of experiencer, other, for instance Lasersohn (2017) is more sympathetic to judges. Besides relying on two Glanzberg's papers (2007, 2016), I shall occasionally refer to Lasersohn, above all to his recent (2017) book which I find quite congenial.

Let me briefly mention two issues that will accompany us throughout the paper. First, there is a respectable tradition (Wright 2008, Lasersohn 2017, Kölbel 2011...) that sees the disagreement in matters of taste as faultless disagreement. Glanzberg is against it (2006:16), and I tend to agree with him. I think that for disagreement to be genuine, the participants have to be dogmatic about their taste(s). If they are naive non-dogmatists the disagreement does not arise. Same if they are liberal. But if they are serious dogmatists, they are both wrong! No faultless disagreement, or so I shall argue.

The other issue is the relation to response-dependence, also noted by Glanzberg. Here is a reminder of Hume, who clearly connected taste with response-dependence:

> 'Tis a common observation, that the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects … (Hume 1978: I.iii.XIV).
> Taste has a productive faculty, and gilding and staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation … (Hume 1983: 88.)

There are many areas in which basic properties might be response-dependent: color, aesthetic objects, emotional qualities (sadness of a situation), meaningfulness of a situation or even of a life as a whole, and then morals. My own conjecture is that most of the manifest properties in human world are response-dependent. Here, I shall just note the connection with predicates of personal taste, and leave the further investigation for future.

2. Glanzberg: semantics, pragmatics and guidance
2.1 Glanzberg's proposal

First, a brief methodological question. What constitutes the meaning of a sentence or a statement and how does one find out its semantics? If Nenad says "Reading Glanzberg's paper is fun", what determines the full meaning of the statement, and how do we recognize it?[2] Glan-

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[2] Devitt (2013) rightly warns against confusing the two questions, the constitutive and the epistemological one.

zberg discusses the issues as metasemantic ones (and reminds us that metasemantics studies how semantic values, including context-dependent ones, get fixed (2016: 2). Here is his summary:

II.3 Metasemantics of *E*

- In section I.2 I noted that implicit thematic arguments have what I call a direct metasemantics. Recall, metasemantics describes how the semantic value of an expression gets set (including how context can help to set it). Direct metasemantics is on the model of a demonstrative, where a referential intention of the speaker in effect directly sets the value. Thematic positions tend to go with referential intentions on the part of speakers. These are especially important for context dependent arguments, where the referential intention does a substantial share of the work in setting the value. We thus see that thematic arguments, even implicit ones, have direct metasemantics. We shall see that this holds for *E* as well, though with a small but I think interesting qualification. (2016: 32)

Glanzberg rightly sees syntax as a guide for semantics. If a trait is recognized by syntax, then it is semantic, not pragmatic. For instance, writing about focus, he notes that

[i]t provides cases where what appears to be surface syntax is not a good guide to underlying linguistic form. This lesson has been learned before, but focus shows that what is on the surface but appears to be merely pragmatic can turn out to indicate underlying syntactic structure. Association with focus shows that this structure can be semantically significant. The first moral of focus is that the appearance of being merely pragmatic can drastically deceive. (2005: 106)

An interesting application of this idea is his stress on anaphora as the indicator of meaning (2016: 30). Start with sentences

"(34) "Bill, Max, and I were eating duck tongue in the market. It was tasty".

Tasty to whom? People find the reading "tasty to us" as fine. So, one should take "It was tasty" as pointing to the experiencer(s), reference to whom is hidden in the preceding sentence "Bill, Max, and I were eating duck tongue in the market." And he notes that it is a clear case of anaphora.[3] And he rightly comments:

II.2.2 Anaphora So far, I have noted that the experiencer of a predicate of personal taste is somehow marked for point of view. This is to give a name to a mysterious phenomenon, but it at least points out some substantial semantic restriction on the value of *E*, if not more. I have labeled point of view a semantic phenomenon, as it appears to be a standing feature of the meaning of an argument position. But it also relates to what kinds of values it can have in context, and so affects pragmatics. (2016: 29)

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[3] And he rightly finds the anaphora-tied explanation in the cases that are less clear to hearers. Here is the quote:
(33) Three people were eating duck tongue in the market.
a) Susan looked (= looked at them).
b) OK/? It was tasty (= tasty to them).
Most of my informants found (33b) acceptable, but many found it somewhat degraded, and more found it clearly degraded in comparison with (33a)" (2016: 30). Since there is no clear anaphora, hearers find it degraded, and have trouble recognizing the experiencer.

I think it is a particular instance of the phenomenon of anaphora and guided saturation that is practically omnipresent in normal conversation.

Pragmaticists, like Francois Recanati (see his 2010 book), have argued that most typical sentences used in everyday speech are incomplete and should be saturated by free pragmatic interpretation, in order to yield truth-evaluable contents. For instance, "I've had breakfast" is truth-conditionally indeterminate (when?), and "It's raining." As well as where is it raining. Or take "Everybody went to Paris", who counts as everybody? But such sentences would most often be said in situations of ongoing communication where a question has been asked, or a pointing has been made, and the like. Consider

> I've had breakfast.

When are such sentences normally produced? Often as an answer to the question "Did you have breakfast today?", or "You look hungry, did you have breakfast?" If we incorporate the question, we end up having the truth-conditional content. "You look hungry, did you have breakfast?" is a usual question, and everyday knowledge about periodicity of having breakfast indicates that what is meant is "today": we again have the truth-conditional content.

Finally, and most ironically, the weather reports. Actual weather reports on TV give you a map with rather precise contours! But with ordinary statement of

> It's raining.

there is a rich area of possibilities. It could be a comment out of blue. Then, *and only* then is it indeterminate the way our authors see it. Normally, it could be and often is an answer to a question:

> "What is the weather like in Budapest?",

and then we have an anaphora. Or,

> "Take a look. Is it snowing?" …is it sunny?"

It is quasi-anaphoric and suggests the area immediately surrounding "you".[4]

2.2 *A general proposal: anaphora and guided saturation*

Indeed, the clearest case of semantic determination from the context of conversation is the case of anaphora. I would like to generalize the mor-

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[4] Glanzberg also suggests an interesting, and for him highly relevant consequences to be derived from the role of anaphora:

> The evidence from anaphora also offers a consideration in favor of treating the point of view restriction as a simply a restriction on the values E can take—like the content of the indexical I—rather than as writing *from the point of view of* into the content of the experiencer argument position. (2016: 31)

> We cannot discuss it in any detail here.

als of our examples, independently of the case of predicates of taste.[5] Let me use material from Stainton; he is more of a pragmaticist, so I cannot be accused of using biased evidence from linguistics. Here is how he introduces the case of elliptic speech exemplifying anaphora.

> Imagine Steve being asked the question
> 'What language does Mary write in?'
> and he says: "In Latin". Steve obviously believes that Mary writes in Latin, and in addition, he thinks that having said "In Latin" he has suggested that Mary writes in Latin. The phenomenon is known as anaphora, and speakers normally have no problem with it. If one asked Steve what he informed his interlocutor about, he would produce the judgment "that Mary writes in Latin." (Stainton 2006: 33)

Here we have the example of anaphora, where the work is done by the syntax, and the resulting intuition that the meaning (in the example "Mary is writing in Latin" is semantic. In looser situations, where there is no pronounced antecedent, the listener and the judge are guided by the canon of the strict case. Let me use Stainton's example (from Stainton 2006: 34). Rob points to a boat and says "Pretty fast". Stainton contrast this with the stricter situation, in which there is a clear syntactic antecedent (He presumably has in mind cases like the following short conversation: "How do you find the speed of the boat? Pretty fast").

But note that *the looser situation is analogous to the stricter situation* What did Rob say? That the boat is pretty fast, intuition replies. And it is *almost* correct. It seems that the listener's and judge's intuitions proceed *by analogy*.

We can then use anaphora as the model for partial determination or guidance: it assumes that anaphora is semantic, shows that anaphor guides the hearer in determining the truth-conditional content, argues that most problematic cases are anaphor-like (and the rest can be dealt with). Let me call my proposal "guidance view". The main steps are easy to grasp:

> First, assume that anaphora is semantic,
> Second, show that anaphora determines the truth-conditional content guides the hearer in recognizing the determination and the content,
> Third, argue that most problematic cases are anaphora-like (and the rest can be dealt with) and that in quasi-anaphoric cases the hearer proceeds in an analogical fashion. If this holds, it follows
> Fourth, that guidance view is very close to being the right one.

By guidance I here mean objective guidance, or quasi-determination, not mere epistemic help. I admit that the construction of content is literally and *stricto sensu* pragmatic, but it is strongly determined-guided by semantic elements.

Let me summarize. I am taking anaphora as a model, very much in line with Glanzberg. I also assume the following distribution of situations. First, complete out-of-the-blue utterances are extremely rare in

normal situations, and when they appear, they are typically uninterpretable. Second, normal anaphora is quite frequent: elliptic sentences very, very often appear in reaction to the preceding discourse, which completely determines the slot-filling. In between these two extremes, we find quasi-anaphoric situations, in which there is a verbal antecedent, but it does not clearly determine the slot-filling in a linguistically-semantically unproblematic way. Finally, there are situations in which verbal antecedents are replaced by other events in interaction: the common direction of the gaze, pointing or almost pointing gestures, and the like.

A pragmaticist, like Stainton, might attack it from the opposite direction: the "guidance" is just a pragmatic phenomenon that has little or nothing to do with semantics. But consider the analogy with indexicals. Their content was first seen as pragmatic, but soon, already with Montague, theoreticians recognized the strong and systematic determination of content, and started counting saturation for main indexicals (I, now) as being semantic or almost. I propose we do the same with quasi-anaphora: the proximity to the pure syntactico-semantic determination (i.e. proximity to anaphora *stricto sensu*) suggests an analogous semantic treatment.

3. *Glanzberg's contextualism about predicates of personal taste*

Here is Glanzberg's official contextualist proposal. He argues that

> [P]redicates like tasty and fun are context-dependent is not all that controversial (...). At least, these expressions show some of the same context dependence that other predicates built from the positive forms of gradable adjectives do:
> context helps to somehow set the standard for how tasty or fun something has to be to count. Just as someone can count as tall relative to one context, where jockeys are under discussion, and not tall in another context, where basketball players are under discussion; so too a cheeseburger might count as tasty, relative to a context where bad bar food is under discussion, and not tasty, relative to a context where the best foods in California are under discussion. (2007: 9)

And he notes:

> The semantics I have just sketched is a 'contextualist' one, attributing the interesting properties of predicates of personal taste to context dependence. This stands in contrast to recent relativist analyses of these sorts of predicates... (2016: 17)

> However the claims I shall defend here are mostly orthogonal to the fundamental points of contention between relativist and contextualist accounts. (2016: 18)

However, in his (2007) paper he has argued against relativism, presenting and defending a contextualist semantics; here, I shall take both papers into account.

> I shall argue that predicates of personal taste, like fun and tasty, contain
> two hidden contextual parameters. One is the familiar standard parameter,
> which (...) is a functional parameter. The other is the experiencer parameter
> I have claimed is present in these predicates (Glanzberg 2007: 15)

And here is his introduction of the experiencer parameter E

> Adjectival predicates of personal taste, like our paradigmatic tasty and fun,
> are gradable adjectives, and so have a standard parameter. But what makes
> them personal taste predicate, I have claimed (Glanzberg 2007), is that they
> also have an experiencer parameter, which I label E. That in turn acts the
> sort of scales they use, in such a way as to interpret them as being about the
> personal tastes of the experiencers. I have thus argued that the semantics
> of these predicates looks something like:
>
> (15) a. [[tasty]] ^{c} = degree-gustatory-quality-experienced-by-E = $\lambda x.\text{tasty}_E(x)$
> b. [[fun]] ^{c} = degree-enjoyment-experienced-by-E = $\lambda x.\text{fun}_E(x)$ (Glanzberg
> 2016: 17)

I shall later argue that the picture corresponds to the the liberal at-
titude, call it E-liberal one.[6] And he continues:

> This stands in contrast to recent relativist analyses of these sorts of predi-
> cates, starting notably with Lasersohn (2005). I of course, think the contex-
> tualist view is correct, and the version of it i have defended relies on these
> contextual parameters. .. indeed, the claims I shall defend here are mostly
> orthogonal to the fundamental points of contention between relativist and
> contextualist accounts. (2016: 17)

It is a pity that he does not discuss the contention in the same (2016)
paper, so we had to rely on the earlier, (2007) one. He also offers a
lot of syntactic evidence; we have to skip it, unfortunely. So, we stay
with semantics and pragmatics of E. Glanzberg notes that the E is
clearly a thematic argument, assigned an experiencer thematic role by

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[6] Here is more on standard setting parameter:
we are assuming that there is some kind of hidden contextual parameter
in gradable predicates that sets a standard, e.g. for tall, a standard for how tall
something has to be to count as tall. Following Kennedy (2007), we considered a
couple of options for how that might work (...):
   (52)   a. Max is tall.
   b. Tall (Max) > d_c.
   c. Tall(Max) > s(tall)
   In the first, we simply have a contextually provided standard value d_c, in the
second, we have a contextually provided function that computes the standard for a
given adjective. (2016: 42)
   Combining the two parameters, for an occurrence of a predicate of personal taste
in positive form, gives something like:
   (16)   a. Stewed duck tongue is tasty.
   b. tasty $_E$ (Stewed duck tongue) > s(tasty$_E$)
   For our purposes here, the most important feature of this analysis is that it relies
on both the contextual parameters s and E. The presence of s is widely accepted (...).
The claim that we need an experiencer parameter E, on the other hand, is in more
pressing need of defense, ...
   The semantics I have just sketched is a `contextualist' one, attributing the
interesting properties of predicates of personal taste to context dependence. (2016:
17)

the predicate, and calls it `thematic hidden parameter' (2016: 27). Most importantly, the experiencer argument picks up its value from the context, usually include the speaker. Most importantly, the parameter is not part of the content, it is „*not written into the proposition expressed."* (2016: 28).This is the basis of Glanzberg's contextualism about taste predicates.

Let me conclude this brief, all too brief, summary of Glanzberg's views noting that he does take seriously the response dependence that is probably linked to taste and taste properties

> To say there is some such parameter for an experiencer is not to determine how it affects the interpretation of expressions like fun. Presumably, if the experiencer class is not inert, we should see some sort of response dependence in the meaning of fun—where the experiencer class fixes whose responses count. But, how the experiencer class does this, and how much response dependence we see, remain questions.
>
> There are lots of properties which have a significant degree of response- dependence, but are not fully response-dependentist. (2007: 12)

Let me note that the candidate area for response-dependence is extremely large. Start with color, say, orange. The response dependentist suggests that being orange in objective sense is being such as to cause the response of visaging phenomenal orange in normal observers under normal circumstances.[7]

We shall be briefly mentioning a taste-related property, beauty. Here again, the response dependentist claims that being beautiful in objective sense is being such as to cause the response of visaging phenomenal beauty in normal observers under normal circumstances.[8] As noted in the Introduction, there are more areas: emotional qualities (sadness of a situation), meaningfulness of a situation or even of a life as a whole, and then morals. My own conjecture is that most of the manifest properties in human world are response-dependent; if this holds, and if in many cases response-dependence has a tight connection with taste, there might be a lot of work to do along the lines briefly alluded to by Glanzberg.

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[7] The standard form of response dependentist argument for this conslusion can be very briefly summarized in the following way

Full phenomenal orange is being intentionally experienced as being on the surface of the fruit. (*A transparency datum*)

 Full phenomenal orange is not on the surface of the fruit. (*From science*)

Full phenomenal orange is not a property of subjective state (*From Transparency*).

Therefore (*by principles of charity and by inference to the best explanation*)

The above conclusion follows.

[8] The form of the argument is the following:

 Beauty (phenomenal) is being intentionally experienced (visaged) as being a property of the picture.(*A transparency datum*)

Beauty is not a viewer-independent property of the picture. (*From science*)

Beauty is not a property of subjective state (*From Transparency*).

Therefore (*by principles of charity and by inference to the best   explanation*)

The above conclusion follows.

But let us return to our specific topic, the semantics of taste predicates. Here, I completely agree with Glanzberg that his contextualist proposal offers a fine reading of many sentences involving predicates of personal taste. My question is whether this reading is the only one. For instance, I hope that my infant grandson will be able, in a year, to say "chocolate is tasty". He will thereby indicate to me that he finds chocolate tasty, but I seriously doubt that he has any reflective knowledge of parameters that might be relevant. For him, being tasty is just the property of chocolate. This does not entail that *he does not understand his language*.

For the example of an opposite situation, still within my family, let me turn to my wife and myself; I have sweet tooth, and, like my grandson, I love chocolate. My wife is not attached to sweet things; she would always prefer fresh fruit to chocolate. When we talk to each other, each of us takes these things into account; when I say "chocolate is tasty", I don't mean is should be tasty for her. And *vice versa*. Again, each of us has a good mastery of language. So, the use of the sentence is slightly different between us (the grandson at his future stage included).

So, why insist that there is just one reading of the sentence? Why not turn to a pluralist alternative?

4. *A pluralist proposal*

I doubt that there is a single correct reading of the use of taste predicates along the lines of *any one* of the proposals we looked at. I agree with Glanzberg that on a sophisticated reading (that I will call „liberal") E determines s in the context, but this does not *dictate* the self-understanding of the speaker. In other words, the relevant sentence (say, "*Roller-coasters are fun.*") admits of several meanings and interpretations, and can express several judgments, some more relativist and some more contextualist, some more dogmatic and others more liberal.

Consider the options again. We have three immediate options in relation to a statement of taste, of the form A is Φ (e.g. "*Roller-coasters are fun.*") and to the stance taken by the speaker-experiencer:

1.   *naive non-dogmatist* experiencer who simply claims that A is Φ and that's it. On meta-level such an experiencer is simply agnostic about further matters, like weather A is Φ for other people, who is right about it, and so on.

2.   a bit more reflective stance is the *dogmatist* one: If you don't agree, you just don't know about A being Φ. I think people who do sincerely debate the issues are honest dogmatists, who naively believe they are objectively right,

3.   the tolerant, liberal one: „A is Φ; for me, I mean. How do *you* find it?"

Glanzberg's official claim: E, and s determined by E are *not* part of the content of speaker's claim can go with both 1 and 2. The naive non-dogmatist experiencer think she is just describing the way roller-coasters are (The way A is). The dogmatist re-interprets E (so to speak) as being universal in scope. Consider:

.   John-the-dogmatist says: "Roller-coasters are fun."
      Mary: But they are not fun.
      John: You are dead wrong.

Their being fun is just seen by him *as a fact* (a value laden fact), not as something that is due to his perspective. Mary can continue, stressing the difference in judgment:

      Mary: Sorry, *you* are dead wrong.

Here we have genuine disagreement, and if there is no universal norm for being funny, the disagreement is not faultless. (For Lasersohn disagreement comes with judge or opinion parameter; but is the parameter essentially different from E?)

So, we have a dogmatic option: if (disagreeing) speakers are dogmatic, E and s make no appearance in the content; the content is just that roller-coasters are fun, period. Or that they are not fun, period. And the disagreement is far from being faultless. The absence of E and s from the content looks good for disagreement, bad for liberal tolerant spekers.

Consider now the relativist alternative: E (or some "judge"-parameter) and s determined by E are part of the content of speaker's claim. (against the official Glanzberg's claim). The alternative is compatible with two options.

Option one dogmatist. John takes his claim, namely the content "roller-coasters are fun" as *the truth*.

Option two, liberal. If Mary disagrees, John will respect her claim; anyway, the content of his opinion is not essentially tied to his perspective. The situation is parallel with the standard use of indexicals:

- John: I am hungry
- Mary: I am not hungry.

John accepts a non-absolute status for his claim. He agrees that "Roller-coasters are fun" usually means fun for the speaker or the speakers' salient group of friends or family. It usually means fun for me or fun for the whole family. But this is our liberal, tolerant option. And no disagreement with Mary. Roland Barthes gives a fine example of a universalist liberal attitude (he does not call it like this) in his retelling of Fourrier's predilections: "the society cannot rest until it has guaranteed (…) the exercise of my manias, whether bizarre or minor" (1989: 77); his example involve liking rancid couscous, linking old chickens and eating "horrid things", like for example the astronomer Lalande eating live spiders. Taste is not to be commanded (1989: 77).

In the literature, relativism is connected with disagreement, and

the latter is characterized as faultless.[9] But at the same time, relativism claims the proposition affirmed in John's utterance has a truth value only relative to John's standards, when he is the assessor, and

Mary's standards, when Marry is the assessor. This gives one some disagreement, but it is hard to see how it can be faultless. From a liberal contextualist standpoint both dogmatic relativists are at fault, so John's disagreement with Mary is not faultless.

In order for the speaker to be non-dogmatic, (s)he has to accept the validity of other points of view and the *s*'s that go with them.then, in short, (s)he has to be liberal:

• *Roller coaster is fun* for me, you know. But, how do you find it?
• I find it not fun, for me, I mean, but I understand your predilection!

But then, the disagreement is lost, and the explanation of disagreement is lost, as Glanzberg also noted (2006: 16).

What about theoretical perspectives accompanying the three first-order stances? Consider it case by case. The dogmatic disagreement goes well with value-absolutism, entailing that one of the parties is simply wrong, and with relativism. Here, it seems to me that no faultlessness is admitted by the speaker; his interlocutor is at fault. If one is not dogmatist about taste predicates, one should accept that dogmatist is simply wrong; no deep disagreement is present. Such a liberal stance goes well with some versions of contextualism. If one is a liberal there is no deep disagreement, so, the idea of faultless disagreement is a myth. In this case, liberalism is wiser than dogmatism. So, I find the whole idea of faultless disagreement dubious: if the speaker is dogmatic and disagreeing there is no faultlessness, if she is liberal, non-dogmatic there is no real disagreement. Here I agree with Glanzberg who once described the idea of faultless disagreement as "absurd" (2007: 16).

But note that language is open to all possibilities. The language of taste attitudes is compatible with all three first-order stances: with naive non-dogmatism, with dogmatism and with tolerant liberalism. Particular uses of language can be classified along second-order options, as agnostic, absolutistic, relativistic and contextualist. But the whole business is linguistically correct, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically, so *there is no single correct reading of the use of taste predicates and the like.* Our naïve agnostic is linguistically in the clear. On the other hand, the absolutist does not reform language, she is into postulating objective value-properties in the world. The relativist is not making a linguistic mistake; her being right or not depends on the domain which is being judged. We are dealing not with semantics, but with matters of reality!

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[9] See, for example, the sources mentioned in the Introduction: Wright 2008, Lasersohn 2017, and Kölbel 2011, as well as papers collected in García-Carpintero and Kölbel 2008.

Now, why do people debate questions of taste? Lasersohn, for example, offers two mutually contradicting answers. First, a cognitive rationale:

> Two parties will normally engage in a dispute about a matter of taste only if each of them regards the other as making an error of taste. This in no way represents a retreat from the idea that disagreements over matters of taste are faultless in our original sense, but is simply a clarification of what kind of fault was envisaged. (Lasersohn 2017: 210)

But then he also offers a pragmatic-sociological rationale:

> the point of the parties in dispute is to gain a social advantage for one's own tastes: to have them adopted more widely, or to give them priority over the tastes of others in planning and decision-making (Lasersohn 2017: 211)

and, importantly, for him this is unconnected with ascribing error to the opposite view!

> "Prevailing" in such disputes cannot mean showing that one's opponent has made some error of fact or logic. The purpose of pressing a dispute over matters of taste is to gain a social advantage for one's own tastes: to have them adopted more widely, or to give them priority over the tastes of others in planning and decision-making. (Lasersohn 2017: 211)

So, for John and Mary to engage in such dispute, it is crucial that John regards Mary as making an error of taste and vice versa. But then we are told that "/p/revailing" in such disputes cannot mean showing that one's opponent has made some error of fact or logic. The two claims simply don't fit together.

My guess is, of course different. I don't agree with the sociological rationale, and I prefer the cognitive one. I think that people who do sincerely debate the issues gustatory or hedonic taste are dogmatist (for example, *E*-relativists), or absolutists who naively and honestly believe they are objectively right. However, as Lasersohn noted—see for example chapter *10.1 Aesthetic judgment and refinement of taste*, of his (2017) book—various response-dependence linked adjectives can and do vary in the degree of dogmatism their standard use allows or requires.

Let me conclude the part on gustatory taste by a summary in form of a table.

	TASTE ATTITUDES—LANGUAGE IS COMPATIBLE WITH ALL OF THEM		
EXPERIENCER	*NAÏVE NON-DOGMATIST*	*DOGMATIST*	*LIBERAL*
1 ^ST ORDER VIEW	Roller-coasters are fun, that's it.	If you don't agree, you just don't know what real fun is.	Roller-coasters are fun, for me, i mean. How do *you* find them?
META-THEORY	*AGNOSTICISM*	*ABSOLUTISM OR RELATIVISM*	*CONTEXTUALISM*
NO LINGUISTIC DICTATE:	Our agnostic is linguistically in the clear...	The absolutist does not reform language and the relativist is not making a *linguistic* mistake...	Finally, the contextualist is in clear...

Most importantly, language is open to all possibilities; there is no linguistic dictate.

What about other response-dependent areas? Here, Lasersohn is a good guide. We are lax about gustatory and hedonic taste, but less so about emotional properties: if someone finds the death of a child comic, we shall be condemning the person. Other response-dependent predicates in other areas might behave similarly.

A nice case is aesthetic-artistic taste that might be more dogmatic: professionals in the field tend to be such about their opinions: Matisse is either better than Picasso, or equal or worse, and if you have a good artistic taste you will agree with me!! They normally don't take their disagreements to be faultless, nor are they normally liberal about their judgments. Different taste areas might have different levels of objectivity taste in flavors might be completely subjective, but in other areas a more dogmatic approach might better capture the actual structure of the relevant value. As Lasersohn notes "certain perspectives may be ranked as objectively better than others" (2017: 214). He mentions that "claims about future contingent events later perspectives seem better than the earlier ones"; the same for epistemic modals in general (2017: 224). Similarly for art, some perspectives are better that others: Matisse-lovers might be right and Picasso-lovers, like the present author, might be wrong.[10]

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[10] Some rare critics might be non-dogmatic, for instance, Clive Bell who wrote

Such an understanding could bring together three independently plausible ideas. The first is that beauty is response-dependent: being beautiful in objective sense is being such as to cause the response of experiencing phenomenal beauty in normal observers under normal circumstances. The second is that there is some degree of objectivity about beauty (and artistic value in general). And the third is that judgments of pictorial beauty are judgments of taste, with all the accompanying semantic options. James O. Young recently noted:

> The question of whether aesthetic judgements are simply statements about subjective preferences or whether they have some non-subjective basis is one of the most important questions of aesthetics, and, indeed, of philosophy. Despite the importance of the question, it has received fairly little attention in recent years. (....) A large majority of philosophers of art is opposed to subjectivism, but comparatively few contemporary aestheticians have argued against it or for a contrary position. Philosophers of language have considered aesthetic judgements, but they have tended to assume that some form of subjectivism is correct. (Young 2017: 1)

It is enough to stick to more dogmatic reading of judgments of aesthetic-artistic taste: Either Matisse-lover is right or Picasso-lover is right; some perspectives are better than others so, no relativism follows. Some response-dependent properties allow for objective standards, so, let us hope the aesthetic-artistic and moral properties are such. But this is a topic for another occasion

5. *Conclusion*

Our discussion, largely inspired by the work of Glanzberg, has led to an alternative proposal. I haves suggested, agreeing with Glanzberg, that the idea of faultless disagreement is dubious. But from there, an alternative route opens. Consider the options in relation to a statement of taste, of the form A is Φ. We noted that the 1st order options are simple. We can have naive non-dogmatist experiencer who simply claims that A is Φ and that's it. On meta-level such an experiencer is simply agnostic about further matters: is A Φ for other people, who is right about it, and so on. One alternative, a bit more reflective stance is the dogmatist one: If you don't agree, you just don't know about A being Φ. I think people who do sincerely debate the issues are honest dogmatists, who naively believe they are objectively right. The other option is the tolerant, liberal one: "A is Φ; for me, I mean. How do *you* find it?" On the meta-level, dogmatic disagreement goes well with value-absolutism, entailing that one of the parties is simply wrong, and with relativism. If one is not dogmatist about taste predicates, one should accept that dogmatist is simply wrong; no faultlessness is present. The liberal stance goes well with contextualism. If one is liberal there is no

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"Matisse *may* yet be a better painter than Picasso." (italics mine); "Matisse and Picasso", May 19, 1920, available at https://newrepublic.com/article/91909/matisse-and-picasso.

deep disagreement. So, the idea of faultless disagreement is a myth. In this case, liberalism is wiser than dogmatism.

But note that language is open to all possibilities. The language of taste attitudes is compatible with all three first-order stances: with naive non-dogmatism, with dogmatism and with tolerant liberalism. Particular uses of language can be classified along second-order options, as agnostic, absolutistic, relativistic and contextualist. But the whole business is linguistically correct, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically, so I am doubtful that there is a single correct reading of the use of taste predicates and the like. Our agnostic is linguistically in the clear. The absolutist does not reform language, she is into postulating objective value-properties in the world. The relativist is not making a linguistic mistake; her mistake might be rather about the reality of values. Finally, the contextualist is in clear, as far as language alone is concerned; her description fits the liberal usage perfectly, she may only have problems in theoretical accounting for other options, but not with mischaracterizing language as used by the tolerant liberal.

This alternative route might be worth exploring. And to conclude with a hedonic taste statement, it was great fun reading Glanzberg's paper, discussing it with him in Dubrovnik, and thinking about it afterwards!

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