

Differences of Taste: An Investigation of Phenomenal and Non-phenomenal Appearance Sentences

Rachel Etta Rudolph

Penultimate version of paper appearing in: *Perspectives on Taste*, edited by Jeremy Wyatt, Julia Zakkou and Dan Zeman (Routledge, 2022). DOI: 10.4324/9781003184225-16

Abstract. In theoretical work about the language of personal taste, the canonical example is the simple predicate of personal taste, *tasty*. We can also express the same positive gustatory evaluation with the complex expression, *taste good*. But there is a challenge for an analysis of *taste good*: While it can be used equivalently with *tasty*, it need not be (for instance, imagine it used by someone who can identify good wines by taste but doesn't enjoy them). This kind of two-faced behavior systematically arises with complex sensory-evaluative predicates, including those with other appearance verbs, such as *look splendid* and *sound nice*. I examine two strategies for capturing these different uses: one that posits an ambiguity in appearance verbs, and one that does not. The former is in line with an approach to *look*-statements prominent in work in philosophy of perception, and I consider how the motivation given in that tradition carries over to the present context. I then show how the data used to support the verbal ambiguity approach can equally be captured on the second strategy, which appeals only to independently-motivated flexibility in adjective meaning. I close by discussing some considerations that are relevant for choosing between the two options.

1 Introduction

Taste as it figures in philosophical and linguistic work about “personal taste” is different from, yet related to, taste as one of the five sensory modalities. For one, “personal taste” extends beyond gustatory taste. Matters of personal taste have to do not only with how things taste, but also with more nebulously-defined experiences of enjoyment, interest, boredom, and so on. It's a matter of personal taste not only that I like the taste of coconut, but also that I find *The Lord of the Rings* movies dull.

In the other direction, there are matters of gustatory taste that are not intuitively matters of personal taste. Matters of personal taste are *evaluative*. To find coconut tasty or *The Lord of the Rings* movies boring is to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to something. Our

personal tastes are a matter not solely of experiencing things, but of experiencing them in a valenced way. When someone asks about your “tastes” they’re asking about your likes and dislikes. If some dish tastes to you like it contains no salt, that has to do with how it tastes in the gustatory sense. But it seems not to be a “matter of personal taste”.

There is, of course, an overlap. Key examples of matters of personal taste are what one finds tasty or disgusting — clearly also matters of gustatory taste. We have a variety of linguistic constructions for getting at this intersecting area. We can use canonical predicates of personal taste (PPTs) such as *tasty* and *disgusting*.¹ We can also use complex expressions that make the gustatory element more explicit, such as *taste good* and *taste gross*.

Note that matters of personal taste that aren’t also matters of gustatory taste cannot be expressed with such complex predicates containing the verb *taste*: I can’t express my boredom with *The Lord of the Rings* by saying that it *tastes dull* or anything similar. This observation seems so obvious that it’s hardly worth stating. But it brings out the distinctiveness of talk about gustatory taste as compared with matters of personal taste of the broader evaluative kind. My starting point in the present paper will be the language of gustatory taste (as well as the other sense modalities), and challenges that arise from its combination with evaluative vocabulary. Throughout, I will also draw connections with discussion of appearance language, centering on *look*-sentences, from the literature in philosophy of perception.

There is a puzzle about complex gustatory-evaluative predicates, like *taste good*. As I’ll show in section 2, while *taste good* can be used synonymously with the simple PPT *tasty*, it need not be. How, then, should we analyze *taste good* so as to predict its possible

¹The literature dealing with PPTs is large, and tends to center on two main phenomena and how they motivate relativist, contextualist, expressivist or other semantic and pragmatic theories: first, faultless disagreement (as well as, to a lesser extent, retraction) (e.g., Kölbel 2004, Lasersohn 2005, Stephenson 2007, Stojanovic 2007, Egan 2010, Sundell 2011, MacFarlane 2014, López de Sa 2015, Anthony 2016, Zeman 2017, Wyatt 2018, Zakkou 2019, Kneer 2021); second, the acquaintance inference (e.g., Ninan 2014, 2020, Anand and Korotkova 2018, Franzén 2018, Kennedy and Willer 2016, Willer and Kennedy 2020). Work that addresses both issues include Pearson 2013, Dinges 2017, Rudin and Beltrama 2019, Muñoz 2019.

interpretations? Similar questions also arise about the interpretation of sensory-evaluative predicates involving other appearance verbs, such as *look splendid*, *smell bad*, and so on. All of these constructions admit of apparently “phenomenal” as well as “non-phenomenal” readings.² To give a rough initial characterization of the distinction, in phenomenal uses, a quality is attributed to the appearance: that something *tastes good* means that its taste is good; by contrast, in non-phenomenal uses, a quality is attributed to the stimulus based on its appearance: that something *tastes good* means that its taste suggests *it* to be good.

There are two main options for predicting these different readings. The first, which I’ll discuss in section 3, is to posit an ambiguity in the appearance verb. I’ll review how such a view has been motivated in previous literature, mostly by sentences with the verb *look* combined with non-evaluative adjectives, like *red* (e.g., Chisholm 1957, Jackson 1977, Brogaard 2014, 2015, Glüer 2017). Then, I’ll show that motivation for an ambiguity in appearance verbs is, if anything, stronger from the sensory-evaluative predicates that I am focusing on. Then, I’ll outline a verbal ambiguity analysis so that we can examine its workings more concretely.

In section 4, I’ll turn to the second strategy for predicting the different readings of sensory-evaluative constructions: namely, by appealing to flexibility in the complement adjective. These evaluative adjectives on their own, even without any appearance language, are very complex. For one, they are gradable adjectives, giving rise to all the subjectivity, vagueness and context-dependence that has been identified in that domain (Barker 2002, Kennedy 2007, among many others). Further, they are *multidimensional* gradable adjectives: Whether something is *good* depends on a variety of factors that may be combined and weighted in different ways, whereas whether something is *tall* (which is not multidimensional) simply depends on its height (e.g., Sassoon 2013, Kennedy 2013). Finally, these adjectives are *perspective-dependent* (Lasersohn, 2005), being used in different cases to ex-

²The label “phenomenal” is based on Jackson 1977, though, as I’ll discuss below, my way of identifying such readings differs from his.

press the assessments of different individuals. As I'll explain, these independently-motivated factors in combination go a long way to predicting the availability of both phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings of sensory-evaluative predicates.

In section 5, I'll conclude by taking stock of the prospects of the verbal ambiguity and adjectival approaches. I'll consider an important challenge that remains for the latter view, namely that the univocal analysis of appearance verbs has trouble explaining why certain other appearance constructions, like *taste like it's good*, don't seem to admit of phenomenal readings. While I'll consider a possible avenue of response, in the end, it may be that taking appearance verbs to be ambiguous best explains the range of possible readings of *taste good* and related appearance constructions. Still, carefully examining both approaches offers a clearer understanding of this complex area of language, showing in particular that motivation for appearance verb ambiguity is narrower than has often been assumed.

2 Two uses of *taste good*

There is a puzzle for an analysis of complex sensory-evaluative predicates. Such predicates can be used in two notably different ways. To illustrate, observe the uses of *tastes good* in the two different contexts specified in (1).

- (1) This cake tastes good.

Context A: Speaker has just tasted a piece of cake and enjoyed it.

Context B: Speaker is sampling cakes for a friend's wedding. The friend has instructed that the cake should be vanilla, which the speaker doesn't like; still, they're trying small bites of the cakes in order to determine which is likely to be a good choice. They taste a cake which they can tell is a good quality vanilla one, though they don't enjoy it.

In context A, when the speaker says the cake tastes good, we take them to mean that they find the taste of the cake pleasing. In this case, they could have equivalently said the cake is

tasty.³ By contrast, in context B, the speaker’s use of *tastes good* is not felt to be equivalent with the PPT *tasty*.⁴ In context B, the claim that the cake tastes good is instead taken to mean that the cake taste as if it would be good for the purposes at hand. The speaker can appropriately say this even if they do not enjoy the taste of the cake.

How should we characterize the meaning of *taste good* in these two contexts? And how is this predicted given the separate meanings of *taste* and *good*? It’s undesirable just to say that *taste good*, as an unanalyzed unit, is ambiguous. For one thing, that would give up on the plausible idea that the meaning of *taste good* (on both uses) is a function of the meanings of its constituent expressions. But it would also make it mysterious why the exact same two-faced behavior arises with a whole range of similar sensory-evaluative predicates.

The puzzle arises not only with *taste good*, and not only with predicates concerning gustatory tastes. It arises with all appearance verbs, when combined with certain evaluative adjectives.

(2) The wine smells bad.

Context A: Speaker has smelled the wine and its scent is rancid and unpleasant.

Context B: Speaker has smelled the wine and can tell from the simplicity of the scent that is of poor quality, but it doesn’t smell unpleasant to them.

(3) The spread looks splendid.⁵

Context A: Speaker sees the spread and finds its arrangement visually appealing; they have no judgment about the quality of the food.

Context B: Speaker sees the spread and is impressed by the variety and quality

³Moltmann (2010), for instance, uses the predicate *taste good* in discussing faultless disagreement and relativism — in contact with the literature on PPTs mentioned in footnote 1. MacFarlane (2014, p. 142) also notes that to the extent that *tasty* motivates truth relativism, so does *taste good*. For more discussion of the relationship between *tasty* and *taste good*, see Pearson (this volume).

⁴PPTs like *tasty* can sometimes be used “exocentrically”, i.e., from a perspective other than the speaker’s, as opposed to “autocentrically”, i.e., from the speaker’s own perspective (Lasersohn, 2005). If *tasty* is used exocentrically, then it could be acceptable in context B. However, autocentricity is the default, and that is enough, I think, to get a contrast in the acceptability of *tasty* across the two contexts. In section 4, I’ll consider whether perspective-dependence might play an important role in explaining the distinction of interest.

⁵For discussion of this example, see Martin 2010, pp. 184ff; also Martin 2020, pp. 102–3. I will return to it in more detail below.

of the food that it seems to contain; they may not judge the arrangement visually appealing.

(4) The singer sounds nice.

Context A: Speaker is listening to a concert and enjoys the singer's voice performance.

Context B: Speaker has heard a description of how friendly the singer is.

(5) The spaghetti feels gross.

Context A: Speaker has put their hands into a bowl of spaghetti and doesn't enjoy its slimy feel.

Context B: Speaker judges by touch that the spaghetti has been overcooked and wouldn't taste good; they may not find the feel of it unpleasant.

For each of these predicates, formed from an appearance verb and an evaluative adjective, we see that very different readings arise in the different contexts. In context A in the above examples, the speaker is taken to be saying that the individual in question has an appearance with a certain quality, either positive or negative. While only *taste good* has the obvious PPT-correlate of *tasty*, *smell bad* perhaps corresponds roughly with *smelly* — a word that could be much more easily substituted in context A in (2) than in context B. In the other cases, there aren't simple PPTs we can use in the place of the complex predicates. Still, there are other ways of paraphrasing the sentences to bring out the intended readings. Let's consider some possible paraphrases for the example with *look* from (3).

(6) The spread looks splendid.

a. The spread is splendid-looking.

b. The look of the spread is splendid.

The paraphrases in (6a–b) are appropriate in context A, but not in context B. By contrast, the paraphrases in (7a–b) are appropriate in context B, but not in A.

(7) The spread looks splendid.

- a. The spread looks like it's splendid.
- b. The spread looks to be splendid.

In context B, in other words, we hear the speaker to be saying that the appearance in question suggests the presence of some further property, which may be independent of that appearance.

To put some labels on this distinction, let us call the first reading — operative in context A — “phenomenal”, and the second — operative in context B — “non-phenomenal”.⁶ At this point, I do not mean these labels to commit me to any particular approach to the distinction. They are simply supposed to latch onto two intuitively different uses of these complex sensory-evaluative predicates.

When it comes to giving an analysis of *look splendid*, *taste good* and other sensory-evaluative predicates, there are two main options. The first is to posit an ambiguity in appearance verbs. On this view, the different readings arise due to different readings of *look* in *look splendid*, *taste* in *taste good*, and so on. I'll discuss this approach next, in section 3. The second rejects any ambiguity in the verb and instead takes the different readings to arise due to flexibility in the interpretation of the complement adjective. On this view, the difference between phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings comes down to *splendid* in *look splendid*, *good* in *taste good*, and so on. I'll address this option later, in section 4.

⁶See esp., Chisholm 1957, chap. 4, Jackson 1977, chap. 2. These authors, and others following them, often distinguish three uses of appearance verbs: phenomenal, comparative and epistemic. (Note: Chisholm's “non-comparative” lines up with Jackson's “phenomenal”.) The data I am interested in most clearly motivates a two-way distinction, which is why I choose simply to speak in terms of phenomenal and non-phenomenal for now. I do not rule out that there may be good reason to draw further distinctions within my “non-phenomenal” category. The non-phenomenal category is unified in that a statement of this sort that something *appears so-and-so* cannot be paraphrased with a claim that just uses *so-and-so* as a property of things (Chisholm, 1957, pp. 44–47). The paraphrases in (6) can be used to test this. There is also some connection between the phenomenal/non-phenomenal distinction and the experiential/representational distinction in Charlow (2021).

3 Are appearance verbs ambiguous?

In this section, I consider the view that appearance verbs, like *look* and *taste* are ambiguous, and that this is what explains the phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings observed in the previous section. I'll begin, in 3.1, by reviewing motivation for such an ambiguity view from the perception literature, focusing on Jackson's argument in chapter 2 of *Perception: A Representative Theory* (1977). This argument does not appeal to any evaluative language, nor does it consider appearance verbs beyond *look*.⁷ Then, in 3.2, I'll consider how the motivation extends to the sensory-evaluative cases of interest here. We'll see that support for the verbal ambiguity view is, if anything, stronger from the evaluative cases than from Jackson's own examples. Finally, in 3.3, I'll sketch an implementation of the verbal ambiguity analysis.

3.1 Jackson on looks

Jackson (1977, chap. 2) argues for an irreducibly phenomenal use of *look*. Consider (8).⁸

(8) The apple looks red.

Jackson argues that there is a use of (8) that cannot be accounted for by taking the predicate *red* to apply to red *things*. There are two options that he rules out here.⁹ First, one might attempt to say that (8) means that the apple looks the way red things look in normal circumstances. However, Jackson holds, these claims come apart in both directions. First, something could look red even if there were no red things at all, and so no way that red things normally look. Second, something can look the way red things normally look without looking red. Imagine we are totally colorblind and see the world in shades of gray. But we

⁷While I focus on Jackson, others who have argued for a phenomenal sense of *look* along similar lines include Chisholm (1957), Byrne (2009), Brogaard (2014, 2015, 2018), Glüer (2017).

⁸Note that Jackson considers explicitly relativized *look* sentences, i.e., with *to*-prepositional phrases specifying an experiencer. I omit these in my discussion, though it is worth considering whether any points that Jackson makes are more plausible about the relativized cases.

⁹These are attempts to analyze the phenomenal in terms of his "comparative" and "epistemic" readings. I consider both to be versions of non-phenomenal readings on my taxonomy (see fn. 6).

have extremely discerning gray vision; we are capable of making just as many distinctions among shades of gray as those with ordinary color vision can make among colors. Then, something can look the way red things normally look — that very specific shade of gray — and yet it doesn't (phenomenally) look red.

This line of reasoning is also connected with Jackson's "knowledge argument" (1982, 1986). Mary, the color scientist who has never left her black and white room, can know that the apple looks red, in the (non-phenomenal) sense of looking the way red things normally look. But it seems there's something else she does not know. And this "something else" is that the apple looks red in a further, phenomenal sense.

The second option that Jackson rules out regarding the interpretation of (8) is that it expresses the speaker's inclination to believe that the apple is red based on visual evidence. There are two problems with this. First, it's possible to felicitously assert (8) even with no inclination to believe that the apple is red (Jackson, 1977, p. 38). However, when Jackson himself first introduces the epistemic use of *look*, he cautions against taking it to imply that the speaker assents (even tentatively) to the claim that things are as they look. He writes:

If this were the case, it would be *inconsistent* to say 'They appear to be [F], but I happen to know that they are [not F].' ... Our account handles such cases by describing them as cases where we take it that though a certain body of evidence supports that *p*, other (non-visual) evidence makes it certain that not-*p*. (p. 31)

In such a case, not only would the speaker not assent to the claim, say, that the apple is red, but they would also not be inclined to believe it.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it won't work to take (8) to be about what the visual evidence supports, even if that evidence is recognized to be possibly misleading. After all, Mary in her black and white room has visual evidence that the apple is red. Still, it seems she can't appropriately say that the apple looks (phenomenally)

¹⁰Martin (2010, sec. 2) discusses the need to distinguish "evidential" and "non-evidential" uses of appearance statements, where the former have the conversational purpose of putting forward the embedded proposition. Jackson's epistemic cases (and my non-phenomenal ones) still need not be used evidentially in this sense. See also Gisborne and Holmes 2007.

red. Thus, Jackson’s discussion leads to the conclusion that there is a sense of *look* that is irreducibly phenomenal.

Before moving on, let me make a note about how these considerations relate to the acquaintance inference. Simple unembedded claims with experiential predicates have widely been observed to give rise to the inference that the speaker has some relevant first-hand acquaintance.¹¹ The presence of this inference is constant across all the different readings of appearance sentences that we’ve been considering so far. For instance, Mary can say, *The apple looks red*, because she has seen the apple and its visual appearance as manifested to her gives evidence that the apple is red. It’s thus not only phenomenal readings that give rise to the acquaintance inference. What makes Mary unable to assert the phenomenal *look* claim is not that she isn’t acquainted with the apple’s visual appearance at all. Instead, the problem seems to be something else about the way that appearance is experienced by her. Because all appearance claims — both phenomenal and non-phenomenal — license the acquaintance inference, and because the acquaintance inference is tied with the speaker’s experience, which is a kind of phenomenology, we must guard against the possible misunderstanding that all appearance statements are phenomenal in the sense of interest here, as defined in section 2. They are not all phenomenal in that sense, in that they do not all seem to be directly characterizing the quality of the appearance. This is compatible with them all still placing some constraints on the speaker’s perceptual experiences, as discussed under the header of the acquaintance inference.

3.2 Sensory-evaluative predicates

Although Jackson does not address appearance claims with evaluative adjectives, his reasons for recognizing a distinctively phenomenal reading of *look red* carry over to *look splendid* and the other sensory-evaluative predicates we saw in section 2. In fact, as I’ll discuss shortly, the reasons seem to be, if anything, more convincing when applied to the evaluative cases.

¹¹See, among others, Pearson 2013, Ninan 2014, 2020, Anand and Korotkova 2018, Muñoz 2019, Willer and Kennedy 2020.

Consider, again, the *look* claim in (9), in context A from above.

- (9) **Context A:** Speaker sees the spread and finds its arrangement visually appealing; they have no judgment about the quality of the food.

The spread looks splendid.

As we saw with *look red*, there seems on the face of it to be a reading of this sentence that cannot be reduced to a claim about splendid *things* (or even splendid spreads). One possible non-phenomenal gloss would be that the spread looks the way splendid spreads look in normal circumstances. Jackson's first reason for rejecting the analogous option about *look red* — that it could be true that the spread looks splendid even if there are no splendid things — sits a bit oddly in this case. So I won't rely on it.¹² Instead, consider the possibility that splendid spreads, i.e., spreads with great quality and variety of food, normally look like messes. It's hard to make a splendid spread look splendid. Whether or not this is true, it certainly seems possible. So, there is a reading of (9) that is not equivalent to the non-phenomenal comparative claim.

The second possible non-phenomenal gloss that Jackson considers, appealing to visual evidence, is also clearly inadequate. In the given context, (9) does not mean that the visual appearance of the spread gives evidence that the spread is splendid. One can truthfully say that the spread looks splendid while not having visual evidence that the spread is splendid, given that one knows that splendid spreads tend to look awful.¹³

In fact, the case for phenomenal *look* is, if anything, more convincing based on the behavior of *look splendid* than *look red*. For instance, Martin (2010, sec. 5) offers a rehabilitation of a comparative (i.e., non-phenomenal) approach to *look red* that does not carry over to

¹²As Martin (2010, p. 192) notes, it's not very convincing with *look red* either, since it seems we can compare things in way of looks even to merely hypothetical entities.

¹³This example is used by Martin (2010, 2020) to defend a distinctively phenomenal use of *look splendid*, where it is the look itself that is characterized as splendid. Note, however, that he claims to account for the difference between phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings without positing an ambiguity in the verb *look*. Thus, his approach is closer to the one I will discuss in section 4 than to the verbal ambiguity view I'll outline in 3.3.

look splendid. The best case for phenomenal *look red* comes from the fact that there seems to be an available reading of (8) (*The apple looks red*) that is false in the scenario where we all see the world in shades of gray. If this sentence has a false reading in the imagined scenario, it seems it must be on its phenomenal interpretation. However, Martin holds, it's not clear that this sentence does have a false reading, instead of merely being unable to convey something which we (thinking about the case from our position of full color vision) know, but which is not part of the literal meaning of the sentence.

Martin offers an analogy with the following comparative claim, which contains no appearance language:

(10) John weighs as much as a sumo wrestler. (Martin, 2010, p. 193)

Most people have a rough idea about how much sumo wrestlers tend to weigh, and so upon being told (10), learn something fairly specific about John's weight. And someone uttering (10) may intend to convey that specific information — reasonably so, given assumptions about common world knowledge. However, arguably, this more specific information is not part of the literal meaning of the sentence. If someone doesn't know anything about how much sumo wrestlers weigh, they can still learn (10), while remaining completely ignorant, say, about whether this means John is below or above average weight for an adult man.

Something similar, Martin suggests, is going on with the apparently phenomenal reading of (8). Literally, it just means that the apple looks the way red things look in normal circumstances. What we're missing, if we see the world in shades of gray, is further information about what this way is. That further information may be something that people, in our world where most people have color vision, generally want to convey with (8). But this can be achieved without taking it to be part of the truth conditions of that statement.

This way of side-stepping the apparent motivation for a phenomenal reading of *look red* doesn't easily carry over to *look splendid*. Consider, again, a context where the spread looks splendid (non-phenomenally) because it looks like it contains a great variety of high-

quality food, but doesn't look splendid (phenomenally) because it is a mess. Applying the comparative strategy we saw with *look red* to this case would involve saying that the spread really does look splendid (in every sense), but that the appearance of a false phenomenal reading is just due to the speaker not knowing more specifically what splendid spreads look like. But that seems wrong. What's missing here isn't any information about the appearance of splendid spreads. (And we can also assume the speaker has ample first-hand acquaintance with splendid-looking spreads.) These considerations point to an important difference between *red* and *splendid*. Although *being* red and *looking* red can clearly come apart in particular cases, there seems to be a deep connection between the two. However, *looking* splendid *being* splendid can simply come entirely apart.

3.3 Verbal ambiguity analysis

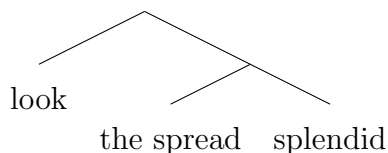
Given the different uses of appearance sentences discussed above, the idea has been proposed that appearance verbs are ambiguous. On this line, appearance verbs are ambiguous at least between a phenomenal and a non-phenomenal interpretation.¹⁴ Note that I do not wish to rule out that there is some connection between the meaning of the verbs in both cases, so that this might be better thought of as *polysemy* than ambiguity. (It certainly isn't ambiguity of the *bank/bank* variety.)

I will now outline one way that a verbal ambiguity view could be implemented. I will apply it to cases involving sensory-evaluative predicates, given that, as just discussed, these provide the clearest motivation for a phenomenal/non-phenomenal ambiguity in appearance verbs. Let's work with the *look* sentence from above, repeated in (11), and let's consider, first, how to capture the non-phenomenal reading most natural in context B, where the speaker is impressed by the variety and quality of the food in the spread, but may not judge it to be visually appealing.

¹⁴Ambiguity in appearance verbs is put forward by Chisholm (1957) and Jackson (1977, p. 49), when they specify different "senses" of *look*. It is also endorsed by Brogaard (2014, 2015, 2018), Glüer (2017). It is discussed, though not definitively endorsed, by Charlow (2021).

(11) The spread looks splendid.

An initial idea (which we will later revise) is that *look* is a raising verb (Brogaard, 2015, sec. 3). That is, although the surface structure does not suggest it, *splendid* is actually being predicated of the surface matrix subject, *the spread*. Thus the logical form of the non-phenomenal reading of (11) is something like the following:



On this view, the appearance verb is a propositional operator, with a semantic value as in (12).

(12) **Non-phenomenal *look* (first pass)**

$$\llbracket \text{look}_{np} \rrbracket^{e;w,j} = \lambda p. \text{visual appearances at } w \text{ evidence to } j \text{ that } \llbracket p \rrbracket^{e;w,j} = 1$$

(Note I include the judge as a parameter in the index primarily as a place-holder; I'll return to some issues connected to judge-dependence in 4.3.)

On the present proposal, (11) means that visual appearances provide evidence (to the judge) that the spread is splendid. An advantage of this analysis is that it makes good on the idea that the non-phenomenal statement is, in some way, about the spread *being* splendid. This comes out on the raising proposal in the fact that the proposition *that the spread is splendid* is a constituent in the logical form of the sentence in (11).

However, a simple raising analysis for non-phenomenal *look* sentences like (11) isn't quite right. Consider the sentence uttered in another context:

(13) **Context C:** Speaker knows that the boss at the catering company always looks happy when her employees set up a splendid spread; speaker sees her boss looking happy.

The spread looks splendid.

In this context, visual appearances suggest that the spread is splendid. And yet, the *look*

sentence — even on its non-phenomenal reading — is not felicitous. That sentence must mean that it is the visual appearance of *the spread* that suggests its splendid-ness.¹⁵ One might claim that adequate visual evidence for the spread being splendid should come from the look of the spread itself. But this is not a satisfactory answer. For it is perfectly felicitous, in context C, to utter a different (also non-phenomenal) appearance sentence: *It looks like the spread is splendid*. Upon seeing her boss looking happy, we can imagine one catering employee appropriately saying this to another, without even having seen the spread in question.

The problem with the raising analysis is that it is unable to recognize a semantic role for the matrix subject, *the spread*, in connection to the appearance verb, *look*.¹⁶ This problem arises for an analysis of non-phenomenal appearance sentences with other appearance verbs as well. Return for a moment to *taste good*, in the non-phenomenal context B:

- (14) **Context B:** Speaker is sampling cakes for a friend’s wedding. The friend has instructed that the cake should be vanilla, which the speaker doesn’t like. . . . They taste a cake which they can tell is a good quality vanilla one, though they don’t enjoy it.

This cake tastes good.

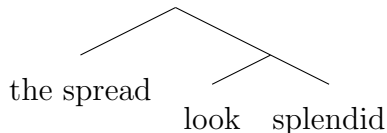
In this context, we explicitly specify that the speaker is basing her judgment on the taste of the cake. And this is essential for the appearance claim to be felicitous. It is perhaps not very common to get gustatory evidence about something from tasting something else, but it is clearly possible. Consider an alternative context for the *taste good* sentence:

¹⁵This is related to the “perceptual source” interpretation discussed by Asudeh and Toivonen 2012, 2017, Landau 2011, Rett and Hyams 2014, Rudolph 2019; however those discussions focus on appearance sentences with *like*-complements, e.g., *The spread looks like it’s splendid*.

¹⁶One might question whether the infelicity in (13) is simply due to the acquaintance inference, which might be accounted for without a change in the semantics proposed in (12). However, the need for a semantic revision is supported by the difference between the sentences in (i), with the appearance constructions embedded under an operator that “obviates” the acquaintance inference (Anand and Korotkova, 2018).

- (i) a. The spread probably looks splendid.
 b. It probably looks like the spread is splendid.

appealing (though perhaps thinking the food is awful), it does not seem that the proposition *that the spread is splendid* enters into the interpretation at all. And this is reflected in the following structure, which the ambiguity approach could offer for the phenomenal case:



Here, the complement of *look* is not a full proposition, but instead a property.

(17) **Phenomenal *look***

$$\llbracket \text{look}_p \rrbracket^{c;w,j} = \lambda P. \lambda x. \llbracket P \rrbracket^{c;w,j} (\text{VIS}_w(x)) = 1$$

The property of being splendid is predicated of the visual appearance of the spread, and not the spread itself.

The same approach works well for the other cases of phenomenal appearance sentences with evaluative predicates. For example, that the cake tastes good (phenomenally) means that the gustatory appearance of the cake is itself good. Whether this means that the cake is good (for whatever purposes might be relevant) is another question.

Interestingly, applying this analysis to the original cases of interest to philosophers of perception like Jackson and Chisholm — with color predicates like *red* — seems more metaphysically loaded than applying it to the evaluative cases we’ve just been discussing. This is because, as Martin (2010) emphasizes, it would commit us to the view that looks have properties like being red. Ordinarily, we simply speak of objects in the world, not looks, having color properties. However, it’s not nearly as controversial to hold that looks or other appearances can have evaluative qualities like being splendid, good, bad, and so on.

An ambiguity view along the lines spelled out here seems promising, empirically, for predicting the possible readings of appearance sentences with evaluative adjectives. But we might ask, is it really necessary to take the verb *look*, in a simple sentence like *The spread looks splendid*, to be ambiguous? While the considerations we’ve seen above have led many

theorists in that direction, there's another approach that is also worth exploring.

4 All in the adjective

As we've seen, the appearance sentence repeated in (18) has two intuitively different readings, one phenomenal and one non-phenomenal.

(18) The spread looks splendid.

Earlier, we said that (18), on its phenomenal reading, does not seem to have the proposition *that the spread is splendid* as a constituent, whereas on its non-phenomenal reading, it does. In section 3, this was then taken as support for the idea that while there is a version of *look* (the non-phenomenal) that takes a propositional complement, there also must be a version (the phenomenal) that does not.

However, that reasoning was a bit quick. What doesn't seem to be a constituent in the non-phenomenal sentence is the proposition that the spread is splendid in some *look-independent* way. But the adjective *splendid* has quite a flexible meaning. Indeed, depending on the context, one could seemingly utter (19) (with *no* appearance verb) to mean either that the spread is splendid in terms of the variety and quality of food it contains, or that it's splendid in terms of its appearance.

(19) The spread is splendid.

Similarly, we observed that (20a), on its phenomenal reading, is equivalent with a sentence involving the PPT *tasty*, in (20b), whereas on its non-phenomenal reading, they are not interchangeable.

- (20) a. The cake tastes good.
b. The cake is tasty.

Only if the speaker enjoys the taste of the cake can they utter the phenomenal appearance sentence, or the PPT sentence, whereas if they judge the cake to be good for some purpose on

the basis of its taste but don't enjoy it, they can still utter the non-phenomenal appearance sentence. This observation, however, is compatible with the proposition *that the cake is good* being a constituent in the phenomenal appearance sentence. The reason, again, is the great flexibility in the adjective *good*. Indeed, given a suitable context, *good* on its own can be used in a way that is felt to be equivalent with *tasty*. Upon tasting some cake, one could utter (21) — with no appearance verb and no PPT — to convey just the same thing as either (20a) (heard phenomenally), or (20b).

(21) The cake is good.

The adjective *good* can be used to talk of all sorts of varieties of goodness, including goodness in terms of taste, i.e., tastiness.¹⁹

The idea behind the “all in the adjective” approach, then, is to leverage this flexibility that is already present with adjectives like *splendid* and *good* to account for the felt difference between phenomenal and non-phenomenal appearance sentences. Doing this avoids the need to posit a structural ambiguity of the sort proposed in the previous section.

There are three key features of evaluative adjectives that may contribute to their two-faced behavior in sensory-evaluative constructions. First, they are gradable adjectives (4.1). Second, these gradable adjectives are multidimensional (4.2). And third, they are perspective-dependent (4.3). I will discuss these features in turn and show how, together, they go a long way towards explaining the phenomena/non-phenomenal distinction.²⁰

Before moving to that, note that I will here be developing the “all in the adjective” approach in a way that assimilates all appearance sentences to the non-phenomenal analysis offered in 3.3. That is, I will take all of these sentences, at the level of logical form, to embed

¹⁹The great flexibility of the adjective *good* is a theme in much work in metaethics, e.g., Moore (1903), Hare (1952).

²⁰Note that other than gradability, these features are not clearly present with adjectives like *red*, that were the focus of the discussion of *look* from Jackson (1977) and others. Thus, the viability of the “all in the adjective” approach depends on something like Martin's 2010 comparative assimilation of apparently phenomenal uses of *look red* discussed in 3.2.

a full proposition, employing the semantic clause from (16). There is, however, another avenue one might want to pursue to avoid a verbal ambiguity view: namely, to assimilate all cases to the structure of the phenomenal sentences offered in 3.3, employing the semantics in (17). On this approach all appearance sentences, both the intuitively phenomenal and non-phenomenal, would have the verb take a property-denoting complement which characterizes the look in question. Taking this approach, the phenomenal cases are easy, while the non-phenomenal ones are a challenge, whereas on the approach I will pursue, it is the reverse. One reason to prefer assimilation in the direction of the non-phenomenal analysis is that there are other forms of appearance sentences that almost certainly embed full propositions. These include, for instance, the constructions in (22).

- (22) a. The spread looks to be splendid.
 b. The spread looks like it's splendid.
 c. It looks as if the spread is splendid.

It thus seems plausible that all appearance constructions include propositional constituents, while it's not plausible that none do. If we want an analysis that can extend to these further constructions, the non-phenomenal is most promising.²¹

4.1 *Gradability*

Evaluative adjectives are gradable. Things aren't just splendid or not, or good or not, but also splendid or good in varying degrees. One spread can be more splendid than another, for instance, even if neither is splendid, full stop. In this respect, evaluative adjectives are like adjectives such as *tall* and *wide*. In 3.3, I left the semantics of *splendid* unspecified, simply assuming that it denoted a function from individuals to truth values. To account for gradability, though, we should, as a first pass, take *splendid* to denote a measure function

²¹The view in Martin 2010, 2020 seems to be an example of the alternative approach. He explicitly disavows an ambiguity in *look*, and takes the complement of *look* in all cases to in some way further characterize the look in question. However, in order to achieve the phenomenal/non-phenomenal readings, he does say that there is a structural ambiguity in the way the complement modifies the verb.

(a function from individuals to degrees), as in (23), where $splendid(x, w, j)$ is x 's degree of splendidness for j at w .

$$(23) \quad \llbracket splendid \rrbracket^{c;w,j} = \lambda x.splendid(x, w, j)$$

This measure function can then compose with various degree morphemes to form predicates. For instance, in our example, it would compose with the “positive form” POS morpheme, as in (24), where g is a variable over measure functions and $s_{g,c}$ is the standard for g in context c .

$$(24) \quad \llbracket POS \rrbracket^{c;w,j} = \lambda g.\lambda x.g(x) > s_{g,c} \text{ at } w$$

Gradability introduces a certain amount of subjectivity into discourse, given different possible contextually-supplied standards for applying the positive form of the adjectives (e.g., Barker 2002).

However, the role of a standard in applying the positive form isn't yet enough to capture the different uses of *splendid* in phenomenal and non-phenomenal appearance sentences. The difference between holding that the spread looks splendid in the phenomenal sense, of being splendid-looking and holding that it looks splendid, non-phenomenally, in the sense that it looks like it's splendid in a look-independent way, is not a difference in *how splendid* one thinks something had to be to count as splendid, full stop. Rather, the difference is in the *way* the spread is being evaluated as splendid, or what *dimension* of splendidness is taken to be relevant.

4.2 Dimensions

Dimension-sensitivity is common with gradable adjectives, and doesn't only show up with evaluative terms. That is, while some gradable adjective, like *tall*, always denote the same measure function, others, like *splendid* (as well as *clever*, *healthy*, etc.) can denote different measure functions in different contexts.

Let us, then revise our semantics for *splendid* so that it denotes a *context-sensitive measure function*, as follows:

$$(25) \quad \llbracket \text{splendid} \rrbracket^{c;w,j} = \lambda x. \text{splendid}_c(x, w, j)$$

Here, $\text{splendid}_c(x, w, j)$ is x 's degree of splendidness of the sort relevant at c for j at w . Adjectives that denote context-sensitive measure functions give rise to *ordering subjectivity* (e.g., Bylinina 2017, Silk 2021). That is to say, in different contexts, the ordering of objects by splendidness can differ (even without any change in the objects themselves). By contrast, the ordering of objects by height does not differ from context to context.

Simply taking *splendid* to denote a context-sensitive measure function still leaves unresolved several aspects of its interpretation. When an adjective has a denotation as in (25), at least two factors go into determining the output degree: (a) Which dimensions of the given property are relevant? (b) If there are multiple relevant dimensions, how are they to be combined to yield the ordering? Question (a) resolves *indeterminacy*, while question (b) resolves *multidimensionality*.

To see the difference between indeterminacy and multidimensionality, let us compare the adjectives *long* and *clever*. The adjective *long* can be used to talk either of temporal duration or physical length. But though the dimension of evaluation can change, only one is ever relevant for a given use of the adjective. Adjectives like this, that can be associated with different dimensions of evaluation in different cases, display indeterminacy.²²

The adjective *clever* is arguably also indeterminate, capable of being used on different occasions to speak, as Klein (1980, p. 7) puts it, of “an ability to manipulate numbers, [or] an ability to manipulate people.” But it seems that, in many contexts, multiple kinds of cleverness can all be relevant. They are combined and weighted in some way to yield an overall assessment of how clever someone is. Thus, *clever* is multidimensional in the sense of Sassoon

²²See Kennedy 2007, sec. 2.1, picking up on cases that Klein (1980, pp. 7–8) calls “nonlinear”; also McConnell-Ginet 1973, Kamp 1975. Solt (2018, p. 75) holds that adjectives like this are not multidimensional, but instead display “dimensional ambiguity”.

(2013, p. 336): It can be “associated with many different dimensions simultaneously.”²³

The notions of indeterminacy and multidimensionality can be fruitfully applied to the evaluative adjectives involved in the sensory-evaluative constructions that we’ve been investigating. Earlier, we saw that (26a) (with no appearance verb) can, in a suitable context, be used equivalently to (26b) (with the appearance verb), and likewise with (27a–b).

- (26) a. The spread is splendid.
b. The spread looks splendid.
- (27) a. The cake is good.
b. The cake tastes good.

How are *splendid* and *good* in the non-appearance sentences to be interpreted, so that we predict the possible equivalence of these sentences? I propose that we should view them (and other evaluative adjectives) as indeterminate between applying in terms of appearances and applying in terms of other respects. The spread can be splendid in way of looks, or *splendid-looking*, but not splendid in some other respect, just as Montana can be large in terms of its geographical extent but not large in terms of its population. That is, depending on the context, c , $splendid_c$ may be a function to degrees of splendidness in visual appearance, or degrees of splendidness in other respects.

However, even settling on appearances vs other respects of evaluation, *splendid*, *good* and so on are still multidimensional. We can both be talking about looks, but still disagree about whether the spread is splendid(-looking), because we prioritize different aspects of the visual arrangement, say, color as opposed to balance. Multidimensionality persists with evaluative adjectives even once the indeterminacy between appearances and other respects is settled.

The result is that (26a) and (27a), with *no* appearance verbs, can in a sense be used “phenomenally” or not. The idea, then, is that when a sensory-evaluative predicate gets

²³On multidimensionality, see also Kennedy 2013, Bylinina 2017, McNally and Stojanovic 2017, Solt 2018, Silk 2021, Soria-Ruiz and Faroldi 2020.

a phenomenal reading, this is because the relevant respect of evaluation for the embedded adjective is appearance, and more specifically, the modality of appearance specified by the verb. Thus, in effect, when used phenomenally, *look splendid* is heard as *look splendid-looking*. The phenomenal reading could then, after all, be captured by taking the appearance verb to have a propositional argument; it just must not be a proposition about appearance-independent splendidness. But the adjective *splendid*, on its own, never had to be used that way anyway. In some cases, though, the sort of splendidness at issue is independent of the type of appearance specified by the verb. And in those cases, we get non-phenomenal readings of the sensory-evaluative construction.^{24,25} Recognizing how dimensions enter into the interpretation of gradable adjectives — in ways motivated independently of anything about appearance language — takes us a long way towards being able to predict phenomenal

²⁴Note that I would predict (on either the view in this section or the last) that (i) is consistent:

- (i) The spread looks splendid, but it doesn't look splendid.

I think this is right. And one can get the true reading with appropriate emphasis on *look* in the second conjunct. That it may be a bit hard to appropriately utter this sentence is not more mysterious than the difficulty of appropriately uttering *I went to the bank, but I didn't go to the bank*, talking about the two different kinds of banks.

Similarly, I predict that (ii) can be acceptable, which I think is borne out with suitable emphasis on *good* (say, in a context where the speaker is enjoying greasy fast food).

- (ii) This food is tasty, but it doesn't taste good.

²⁵An alternative explanation might appeal to comparison classes instead of dimensions. The idea would be to think of *look splendid* on the model of *splendid spread*, when it comes to determining what kind of splendidness is at issue. Kennedy (2007) argues one should not take the comparison class to be an argument of the gradable adjective, due to examples like (i).

- (i) Alice's car is an expensive BMW, but it's not expensive for a BMW.

With just the first conjunct, one would naturally interpret the sentence to mean that the car is expensive *for a BMW*. But that is merely a pragmatic preference — as we can tell from the fact that the overall sentence in (i) is not a contradiction. Similarly, with *look splendid*, it may be especially natural to evaluate the spread as splendid *for a visually appearing thing*, which would give rise to the phenomenal reading. But, just as with *expensive BMW*, this link is optional. Non-phenomenal readings arise when the context naturally supplies a different comparison class. Something like this is suggested by Martin (2020, p. 103), when he holds that adjectives like *splendid* “lack category restrictions” and so we can shift the comparison group from, say “splendid for the look of something” to “splendid for a platter of food.” His way of characterizing things doesn't quite fit with my suggested analysis, on which *splendid* is always being attributed to the spread itself. Still, the possible role of shifting comparison classes is worth keeping in mind.

and non-phenomenal readings of sensory-evaluative predicates. However, we need one more ingredient in order to capture all apparent phenomenal cases.

4.3 *Perspectives*

One might question: To get a phenomenal reading, is it enough to specify the dimension that is being used for evaluating the complement adjective? This might seem to be sufficient when considering the case of *look splendid*. However, recall the case with *taste good*, in the non-phenomenal context B, repeated here:

- (28) **Context B:** Speaker is sampling cakes for a friend’s wedding. The friend has instructed that the cake should be vanilla, which the speaker doesn’t like. . . . They taste a cake which they can tell is a good quality vanilla one, though they don’t enjoy it.

This cake tastes good.

The key thing to notice is that, here, even on the non-phenomenal reading, the sentence with *taste good* is used to say that the cake is good-*tasting* in some sense. After all, the speaker cares about how the cake will taste to those who will eat it, and not about some other type of goodness.

What, then, makes (28) in context B still fall short of being used phenomenally? The answer, I propose, is that the embedded adjective, *good* — although it is being heard as *good-tasting* — is also being used *exocentrically*, as opposed to *autocentrically* (Lasersohn, 2005). That is to say, the individual whose assessment of good-tastingness matters is not the speaker herself, as it usually is by default, but rather someone else or some other group.

The possibility of both autocentric and exocentric uses is typically associated with the *judge-dependence* of the predicates in question. When the application of a predicate can vary from one judge to another, then the possibility also arises that the judge, though by default the speaker — giving rise to autocentric uses — can be shifted in some contexts to someone else — giving rise to exocentricity. Standard examples make use of PPTs, as in (29).

- (29) a. The new cat food is tasty. (Amber gobbles it all up right away.)

- b. The roller coaster was fun. (I didn't set foot on it but the kids couldn't get enough.)

There are many questions about how a judge enters into the interpretation of such predicates, and, indeed, whether a judge is needed in the semantics at all (e.g., Pearson 2013, Muñoz 2019, Moltmann, this volume). These questions are orthogonal to my interests here. I will here take judge-dependence simply as a stand-in for whatever it is about the meaning of these predicates that gives rise to the perspectival differences across autocentric and exocentric uses. The key point is that such a phenomenon is widely recognized in cases that do not involve appearance language. My suggestion here is that this fact, combined with the non-phenomenal interpretation of appearance verbs from 3.3 as well as the dimension-sensitivity discussed in 4.2, predicts the availability of phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings of sensory-evaluative predicates.

The non-phenomenal reading of the *taste good* sentence in context B arises because it is used to convey, in effect, that the taste of the cake suggests that it is good-tasting *to the wedding guests*. By contrast, a phenomenal reading arises when the sentence is used to convey that the taste of the cake suggests that is good-tasting *to the speaker*. Thus, the canonical examples of “phenomenal” appearance sentences, on this approach, are ones where the embedded adjective is not only interpreted along the dimension of the appearance verb, but is also used autocentrically.²⁶

On the view I am presenting, there are in fact two different “loci” for perspective-dependence in the sensory-evaluative constructions under examination. In 4.2, we said that, in the phenomenal case, the predicate *look splendid* is used to mean *look splendid-looking*, and *taste good* to mean *taste good-tasting*. Now, we are adding that to truly predict the

²⁶There is debate about the relationship between judge-dependence and multidimensionality. I assume that there is a kind of experiential assessment associated with the judge in at least some cases, including with PPTs and adjectives like *splendid-looking*, that is distinct from multidimensionality as it arises with adjectives like *clever*. For related discussion, see, e.g., Bylina (2017), Solt (2018), Kaiser and Herron Lee (2018), Soria-Ruiz and Faroldi (2020).

phenomenal reading, we also need the claim to be made autocentrically. But we should ask: Considering the case of *taste good*, must the speaker be the judge for the verb *taste*, for the adjective *good(-tasting)*, or both? That there can be different perspectives associated with these different pieces of the sentence can be shown from the fact that multiple experiencer prepositional phrases can co-occur:

(30) This treat tastes good-tasting for cats to me.

This is a slightly odd sentence, since it implies that I have tasted the treat and judge, on the basis of its taste, that it would taste good to cats. There’s no implication here that I enjoyed the treat. It’s possible, then, for the verb *taste* to be used autocentrically, but to evaluate good-tastingness as an exocentric property.²⁷ My sense is that this kind of use is non-phenomenal. Indeed, it’s quite similar to the cake-sampling situation in context B, which we recently reviewed in (28). This shows that it’s really the autocentricity or exocentricity of the embedded predicate that is determining whether a sentence with a sensory-evaluative predicate is phenomenal or non-phenomenal. All the cases we’ve been discussing are autocentric with respect to the verb.²⁸

In sum, the “all in the adjective” approach leverages two key independently-motivated features of the adjectives embedded in sensory-evaluative constructions in order to explain the availability of phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings. First, the adjectives can be evaluated with respect to different dimensions; second, they are perspective-dependent, allowing for both autocentric and exocentric uses. Putting these together, we notice that phenomenal readings arise when the adjective is evaluated autocentrically and along the

²⁷On related “perspective plurality” and its implications for an analysis of PPTs, see Kneer et al. 2016.

²⁸The phenomenal/non-phenomenal difference seems to persist even with exocentric uses of the main verb. For instance, imagine we are observing a bird who chews up food to feed to its young, in addition to eating the food itself. And let’s imagine that ornithologists have determined that the bird judges by taste whether some food is good for their young and chews this food in a distinctive way. Then, observing the bird chewing in this distinctive way, we might remark, *That food tastes good*, with the verb anchored exocentrically to the bird, but the bird “judging” that the food is good for its young. This would be a non-phenomenal reading. By contrast, if we just observe the bird seeming to enjoy some food, we could utter that same sentence, again exocentrically, but this time with a phenomenal reading.

dimension of the appearance specified by the verb. On this approach, phenomenal readings are in some sense “epiphenomenal”. There’s nothing especially unified about them, and they don’t call for any special interpretive machinery. They simply arise due to a confluence of factors that can also show up separately and in many other linguistic contexts.

5 Conclusion: prospects for the two approaches

Let’s step back and assess the prospects of the two approaches we have considered for analyzing sensory-evaluative predicates, like *look splendid* and *taste good*. The puzzle was to account for both their phenomenal and non-phenomenal readings, as distinguished in section 2. The verbal ambiguity approach, discussed in section 3, accounts for the distinction through two different argument structures for appearance verbs. The “all in the adjective” approach, discussed in section 4, has the advantage of maintaining uniform semantics for appearance verbs, while accounting for the distinction through independently-motivated features of adjective meaning. However, I would like to conclude by discussing a challenge that still faces this second view.

The challenge arises when we examine the relationship between sensory-evaluative predicates and other slightly different appearance constructions. Namely: Why is there such a felt difference between the sentences in (31)?

- (31) a. The cake tastes good.
b. The cake tastes like it’s good.

The “all in the adjective” approach can explain why (31a) can be interpreted either phenomenally or non-phenomenally. However, it leaves it mysterious why (31b) seems unable to be heard phenomenally. If the adjective *good* could, on its own, contain all the “phenomenal” material, why does (31b) seem only to have a non-phenomenal reading?

The most promising response on behalf of “all in the adjective” should appeal, I think, to competition between the different more and less complex surface syntactic forms. Assume

that, in (31a), proximity between the adjective *good* and the verb *taste* leads *good* by default to be evaluated along the dimension of taste; and assume, furthermore, that judge-dependent expressions are by default used autocentrically. These two assumptions have the result that (31a) by default gets interpreted phenomenally, with this only being overridden by a suitably special context (like context B from above). If we then take it that the more complex form in (31b) more readily lends itself to embedding the claim that something is good in other respects or for other judges, then we can understand why it would be rare, if not impossible, to use (31b) to convey the phenomenal claim. There is a simpler form, namely (31a), that will always do better, in that the desired reading is the default for it.²⁹ While many details remain to be worked out, perhaps a pragmatic story along these lines can explain the felt difference between (31a) and (31b) without stipulating that the truth conditions available to each must, in principle, be different.

Still, given the challenge from (31), the verbal ambiguity approach may in the end be well-motivated. Nevertheless, it's worthwhile to work out the possibility of leveraging flexible adjective meanings to account for the different uses of appearance sentences. And importantly, in assessing whether we must depart from that view, we should consider not only the meaning of *taste good* and other sensory-evaluative predicates on their own, but also the interpretive possibilities of these constructions in comparison to others.

Acknowledgments

For helpful discussion of this work, I wish to thank participants in the symposium on experiential language at the 2021 (virtual) Pacific APA, as well as audience members at the Dianoia Institute of Philosophy language workshop. Special thanks to Melissa Fusco, Dilip Ninan, Arc Kocurek, and Julia Zakkou for comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

²⁹There may be some special contexts in which *good* in (31b) could be heard as *good-tasting to me*.

- (i) This cake tastes like it's good, but it's not — it only tastes that way because we just ate miracle berries.

Miracle berries are fruits that make everything taste much sweeter than they normally would. With (i), it seems that the speaker is holding that the cake tastes like it's good-tasting to them, but they doubt that it truly is good-tasting to them, since they think they wouldn't like its taste if they ate it without the influence of the berries. Thanks to Dilip Ninan for suggesting this case.

References

- Anand, P. and Korotkova, N. (2018). Acquaintance content and obviation. In Sauerland, U. and Solt, S., editors, *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 22*, pages 55–72.
<https://doi.org/10.18148/sub/2018.v22i1.65>.
- Anthony, A. (2016). Experience, evaluation and faultless disagreement. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 59(6):686–722.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2016.1208923>.
- Asudeh, A. and Toivonen, I. (2012). Copy raising and perception. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 30:321–380. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-012-9168-2>.
- Asudeh, A. and Toivonen, I. (2017). A modular approach to evidentiality. In Butt, M. and King, T. H., editors, *Proceedings of the LFG '17 Conference*, pages 45–65.
- Barker, C. (2002). The dynamics of vagueness. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25:1–36.
- Brogaard, B. (2014). The phenomenal use of ‘look’ and perceptual representation. *Philosophy Compass*, 9/7:455–468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12136>.
- Brogaard, B. (2015). Perceptual reports. In Matthen, M., editor, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Perception*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199600472.013.005>.
- Brogaard, B. (2018). *Seeing and Saying: The Language of Perception and the Representational View of Experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Bylina, L. (2017). Judge-dependence in degree constructions. *Journal of Semantics*, 34(2):291–331. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffw011>.
- Byrne, A. (2009). Experience and content. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 59(236):429–451.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9213.2009.614.x>.
- Charlow, N. (2021). Experiential content. Manuscript.
- Chisholm, R. (1957). *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study*. Cornell University Press.
- Dinges, A. (2017). Relativism, disagreement and testimony. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papq.12191>.
- Egan, A. (2010). Disputing about taste. In Feldman, R. and Ted A. W., editors, *Disagreement*, pages 247–286. Oxford University Press.
- Franzén, N. (2018). Aesthetic evaluation and first-hand experience. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2018.1425729>.
- Gisborne, N. and Holmes, J. (2007). A history of English evidential verbs of appearance. *English Language and Linguistics*, 11(1):1–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674306002097>.
- Glüer, K. (2017). Talking about looks. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8:781–807.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-017-0350-7>.
- Hare, R. M. (1952). *The Language of Morals*. Clarendon Press.
- Jackson, F. (1977). *Perception: A Representative Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, F. (1982). Epiphenomenal qualia. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32:127–136.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2960077>.
- Jackson, F. (1986). What Mary didn’t know. *Journal of Philosophy*, 83:291–295.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2026143>.
- Kaiser, E. and Herron Lee, J. (2018). Predicates of personal taste and multidimensional

- adjectives: An experimental investigation. In Bennett, W. G., Hracs, L., and Storoshenko, D. R., editors, *Proceedings of the 35th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, pages 224–231, Somerville, MA. Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Kamp, H. (1975). Two theories of the adjective. In Keenan, E., editor, *Formal semantics of natural language*, pages 123–155. Cambridge University Press.
- Kennedy, C. (2007). Vagueness and grammar: the semantics of relative and absolute gradable adjectives. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 30:1–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-006-9008-0>.
- Kennedy, C. (2013). Two sources of subjectivity: qualitative assessment and dimensional uncertainty. *Inquiry*, 56:258–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2013.784483>.
- Kennedy, C. and Willer, M. (2016). Subjective attitudes and counterstance contingency. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT)* 26.
<https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v26i0.3936>.
- Klein, E. (1980). A semantics for positive and comparative adjectives. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 4:1–45.
- Kneer, M. (2021). Predicates of personal taste: empirical data. *Synthese*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03077-9>.
- Kneer, M., Vicente, A., and Zeman, D. (2016). Relativism about predicates of personal taste and perspective plurality. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 40:37–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-016-9198-z>.
- Kölbel, M. (2004). Faultless disagreement. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 104(1):53–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0066-7373.2004.00081.x>.
- Landau, I. (2009). This construction looks like a copy is optional. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 40(2):343–346. <https://doi.org/10.1162/ling.2009.40.2.343>.
- Landau, I. (2011). Predication vs. aboutness in copy raising. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 29:779–813. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-011-9134-4>.
- Lasersohn, P. (2005). Context dependence, disagreement, and predicates of personal taste. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 28:643–686.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-005-0596-x>.
- López de Sa, D. (2015). Expressing disagreement: a presuppositional indexical contextualist relativist account. *Erkenntnis*, 80:153–165.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-014-9664-3>.
- MacFarlane, J. (2014). *Assessment Sensitivity: Relative Truth and its Applications*. Oxford University Press.
- Martin, M. G. F. (2010). What’s in a look? In Nanay, B., editor, *Perceiving the World*, pages 160–225. Oxford University Press.
- Martin, M. G. F. (2020). Variation and change in appearances. In Vogt, K. M. and Vlasits, J., editors, *Epistemology after Sextus Empiricus*, pages 89–115.
- McConnell-Ginet, S. (1973). *Comparative Constructions in English: A Syntactic and Semantic Analysis*. PhD thesis, University of Rochester.
- McNally, L. and Stojanovic, I. (2017). Aesthetic adjectives. In Young, J., editor, *The Semantics of Aesthetic Judgment*, pages 17–37. Oxford University Press.
- Moltmann, F. (2010). Relative truth and the first person. *Philosophical Studies*,

- 150(2):187–220. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-009-9383-9>.
- Moltmann, F. (2022). Tastes and the ontology of impersonal perception reports. In Wyatt, J., Zakkou, J., and Zeman, D., editors, *Perspectives on Taste*. Routledge.
- Moore, G. E. (1903). *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge University Press.
- Muñoz, P. (2019). *On Tongues: The Grammar of Experiential Evaluation*. PhD thesis, University of Chicago.
- Ninan, D. (2014). Taste predicates and the acquaintance inference. In Snider, T., D’Antonio, S., and Weigand, M., editors, *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 24*, pages 290–309. <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v24i0.2413>.
- Ninan, D. (2020). The projection problem for predicates of taste. In Rhyne, J., Lamp, K., Dreier, N., and Kwon, C., editors, *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 30*. <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v30i0.4809>.
- Pearson, H. (2013). A judge-free semantics for predicates of personal taste. *Journal of Semantics*, 30(1):103–154. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffs001>.
- Pearson, H. (2022). Individual and stage-level predicates of personal taste: another argument for genericity as the source of faultless disagreement. In Wyatt, J., Zakkou, J., and Zeman, D., editors, *Perspectives on Taste*. Routledge.
- Rett, J. and Hyams, N. (2014). The acquisition of syntactically encoded evidentiality. *Language Acquisition*, 21(2):173–198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10489223.2014.884572>.
- Rudin, D. and Beltrama, A. (2019). Default agreement with subjective assertions. In Blake, K., Davis, F., Lamp, K., and Rhyne, J., editors, *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 29*, pages 82–102. <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v29i0.4597>.
- Rudolph, R. E. (2019). A closer look at the perceptual source in copy raising constructions. In Espinal, M. T. et al., editors, *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 23*, volume 2, pages 287–305, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès). <https://doi.org/10.18148/sub/2019.v23i2.612>.
- Sassoon, G. W. (2013). A typology of multidimensional adjectives. *Journal of Semantics*, 30:335–380. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffs012>.
- Silk, A. (2021). Evaluational adjectives. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 102(1):127–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12635>.
- Solt, S. (2018). Multidimensionality, subjectivity and scales: Experimental evidence. In Castroviejo, E., McNally, L., and Sassoon, G. W., editors, *The Semantics of Gradability, Vagueness, and Scale Structure*, pages 59–91. Springer, Berlin.
- Soria-Ruiz, A. and Faroldi, F. L. G. (2020). Moral adjectives, judge-dependency and holistic multidimensionality. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2020.1855241>.
- Stephenson, T. (2007). Judge dependence, epistemic modals, and predicates of personal taste. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 30:487–525. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-008-9023-4>.
- Stojanovic, I. (2007). Talking about taste: disagreement, implicit arguments and relative truth. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 30:691–706. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-008-9030-5>.

- Sundell, T. (2011). Disagreement about taste. *Philosophical Studies*, 155(2):267–288.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-010-9572-6>.
- Willer, M. and Kennedy, C. (2020). Assertion, expression, experience. *Inquiry*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2020.1850338>.
- Wyatt, J. (2018). Absolutely tasty: an examination of predicates of personal taste and faultless disagreement. *Inquiry*, 61(3):252–280.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2017.1402700>.
- Zakkou, J. (2019). Denial and retraction: a challenge for theories of taste predicates. *Synthese*, 196:1555–1573. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1520-y>.
- Zeman, D. (2017). Contextualist answers to the challenge from disagreement. *Phenomenology and Mind*, 12:62–73. https://doi.org/10.13128/Phe_Mi-21106.