Workshop *Expressing the self: philosophical and linguistic aspects*

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**The Scope and Importance of First-Person-Oriented Genericity**

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**1. First-person-oriented genericity**

The peculiarity of generic *one*

Not just contribution to truth conditions, but to conditions on appropriate use of the sentence.

First-person-based genericity

(1) a. One can see the picture from the entrance.

First-person-directed genericity

(1) b. One is not allowed to enter the room.

Generic *one* in indicative conditionals

(1) c. When one is an angel, one is neither human nor divine.

Strategies for licensing the first person connection of generic *one*

Strategy 1: Inference from the First Person

Generic *one* is licensed in a (simple) sentence that establishes a generalization based on a first-person application of the predicate.

Strategy 2: Inference to the First Person

Generic *one* is licensed in a (simple) sentence that states an (already established) generalization that allows for an immediate application to the first person in the reasoning relevant in the context of discourse.

Strategy 3: Inference from the Simulating Self

Generic *one* is licensed in a sentence that expresses an inference from the first person pretending to meet certain conditions.

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**2. The semantic status of generic *one***

Generic *one* and arbitrary PRO:

(2) a. PROarb to live a great life is to realize one’s true potential.

b. The tailor knows what PROarb to wear at one’s own wedding.

Generic *one* leads to generic sentences, not just universally quantified sentences

(3) a. John doubts that people can see the picture from the entrance.

b. John doubts that one can see the picture from the entrance.

c. John doubts that everyone can see the picture from the entrance.

Genericity-inducing and bound variable occurrences of generic *one*:

(4) a. One sometimes thinks one’s life is too short.

b. Gn x x sometimes thinks that x’s life is too short.

c. ∀w ∀x (wRwo & x ∈ D(w) & N(w)(x) & C(w)(x) 🡪 P(w)(x))

Bound variable use without first-person orientation:

(5) a. I am the only one that has done my homework.

b. Sometimes one thinks one is the only one that has not done one’s homework.

Generic *one* cannot be bound by adverbs of quantification but only the generic operator:

(6) a. People sometimes are not talented enough to write great fiction.

b. One sometimes is not talented enough to write great fiction.

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**3. First-person based genericity**

The restriction of generic *one* to conscious beings:

(7) a. If one is a Martian, one is not susceptible to human disease. (Safir, 2000)

b. ? If one is a horse, one eats hay.

c. ??? If one is a box, one is put on the shelf.

(8) One can see the picture from the entrance.

I can see the picture from the entrance.

(9) a. One can see the picture from the entrance

b. A normal person can see the picture from the entrance.

The second person as the agent meant to accept the statement (first-person-directed genericity)

(10) a. One should not enter this room.

b. An ordinary person should not enter this room.

First person as the described agent in attitude reports

(11) John thinks that one can lift the box with one hand.

As the described addressee / theme

(12) John convinced Mary that one can see the picture from entrance.

Restriction on predicates

Predicates expressing physical possibility:

(13) a. One can die from eating these mushrooms.

b. One can open the bottle with one hand.

c. One can easily jump over the fence.

Predicates describing experiences in certain types of situations:

(14) a. One feels tired after such a long day.

b. One gets really upset when something like this happens

Impossible predicates:

(15) a. ?? One has a nose.

b. The typical person has a nose.

(16) a. ?? One lives in a big city.

b. People live in a big city.

First-person-based genericity

(17) a. John found out that one can see the picture from the entrance.

b. John found out that people (a normal person) can see the picture from the

entrance.

(18) a. John fond that one can easily forget one’s own past experiences.

b. John fond that people (a normal person) can easily forget their (his) past

experiences.

(19) a. John suddenly knew how one feels after a major victory.

b. John suddenly knew how people feel after a major victory.

First-person-based genericity

Generic *one* ranges over individuals in a contextually restricted class, but as individuals with whom the agent identifies.

The agent applies the predicate to everyone in the group on the basis of applying the predicate to oneself and abstracting from the peculiarity of one’s own situation.

Contextual restriction

(20) One has to hand in the essay tomorrow.

Application of the predicate on the basis of *detached self-reference*:

(21) a. One can see me from the entrance.

b. One can solve the equation.

(22) a. Looking at Bill, John realized how one looks with unkempt hair and shabby clothes.

b. Looking at what turned out to be a mirror in the bus, John realized how one looks with

unkempt hair and shabby clothes.

Application of the predicate to everyone (meeting relevant condition) ‘as if to oneself’, in the detached sense of ‘self’.

Application of the predicate on the basis of projecting oneself onto everyone meeting relevant condition / by simulating everyone meeting relevant conditions

Simulation

Projecting oneself onto / identifying with / immediate taking the perspective of the other

Generic simulation: projecting oneself onto anyone meeting relevant conditions

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**4. First-person-directed genericity**

(23) a. One is not allowed to enter the building.

b. One has to hand in the handout tomorrow.

First-person orientation: Generic-*one* sentence should serve as a premise in practical reasoning – on the part of the addressee.

Description of conclusion of practical reasoning:

(23’) First one hand went to church. Then one went to dinner.

Generic *one* in conditionals: inference from the simulating self

(24) a. When one is taller than John, one is taller than Bill.

b. When one is a Martian, one is not susceptible to human disease.

The first-person-oriented strategy licensing generic one in conditionals:

Agent pretends to have the property expressed by the antecedent, then draws inference to the having the property expressed consequent.

Simulation as ‘direct projection’ (in the sense of R. Gordon), therefore no counterfactual mood!

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**5. The formal semantics of first-person-oriented genericity**

(25) a. One can see the picture from the entrance.

b. For any one x, x as someone with whom the speaker identifies can see the

picture from the entrance.

(26) a. John as a father knows how children behave.

b. Jean as a true Frenchman knows about wine.

Moltmann (2006): objects under a perspectives as pairs consisting of object and property

(27) λy[Gn x can see the picture from the entrance(<x, λz[z = y]>)]

Moltmann (2010): qua objects

(28) For a property P and an individual d,

1. d qua P exists in a world w at a time t iff P holds of d in w at t.

2. d qua P is identical to a qua object d’ qua P’ just in case d = d’ and

P = P’.

3. d qua P has a property Q just in case d has Q at the time it is P.

4. d qua P has only those properties of d that d has in virtue of being P / for which being P

is relevant or has some purpose.

(29) λz[Gn x can see the picture from the entrance(qua(x, λy[I y z]))]

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**6. Connection to faultless disagreement**

Interaction with predicates of personal taste

Co-variation of the experiencer with generic *one*

(30) a. It is pleasant when one is walking in the park.

b. It is pleasant PROarb to walk in the park.

c. When one drinks this cold, it is delicious.

d. When wine does not taste good, one should throw it away.

Detached self-reference:

Mother to child:

(31) You should eat apple sauce. It is tasty.

(32) Chocolate tastes good.

One should eat what tastes good.

One should eat chocolate.

Faultless disagreement

(33) A: Frog legs taste good.

B: Frog legs do not taste good.

‘Faulty agreement’:

(34) a. A and B agree that frog legs taste good.

b. A and B think the same thing.

Faultless disagreement with generic *one*

(35) a. One can sleep on this sofa.

b. One cannot sleep on this sofa.

‘Faulty agreement’:

(36) John and Mary agreed that one can sleep on this sofa.

(37) A discovered that one can see the picture from the entrance.

B discovered that one can see the picture from the entrance.

A and B discovered the same thing (namely that one can see the picture from

the entrance) / made the same discovery.

Faultless disagreement only in *truth-directed contexts*

(38) a. ? John exclaimed that the wine tastes good. Mary disagreed with him.

b. John claimed that white chocolate tastes good. Mary disagreed with him.

Sentences expressing personal judgments (non-truth-directed context)

(39) a. I find this tasty.

b. I find that one can sleep on the sofa.

c. Oh, that’s tasty!

First-person-directed genericity

(40) a. The dinner will be tasty.

b. The homework will be easy.

Logical form:

(41) λx[Gn z nice(^walk in the park(qua(z, ky[I y x]), qua(z, λy[I y x]))]

Assessing the truth of claims involving generic *one* or predicates of taste.

The account of faultless disagreement treats truth of first-person-based generic sentence as assessor-relative.

Assessor-relativity also intuitively holds for ‘claims’ and other ‘attitudinal objects’ with a first-person-oriented content.

(42) a. John agreed with Mary’s claim that one can sleep on the sofa

b. John agreed with Mary’s claim that this type of chocolate tastes good.

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**7. The scope of first-person-oriented genericity**

Predicates of moral evaluation

(44) a. It is good PROarb to treat others with respect.

b. PROarb to torture animals is terrible.

Ability predicates

Equivalences

(45) a. One can see X from the entrance.

b. X is visible from the entrance.

(46) a. One can carry X.

b. X is portable.

Predicates of appearance

(47) A: Mary looks tired.

B. No she does not

C: I agree.

(48) When one looks at Mary more closely, she looks very tired.

(49) a. X is handsome

b. X looks good

c. ?? One likes x’s appearance.

Epistemic modals

(50) For all I know, John may be in Paris.

Faultless disagreement

(51) a. John could be at home.

b. No, John could not be at home

(52) a. John may be in Paris.

b. For all one knows, John may be in Paris.

Relative adjective

(53) A: Joe is rich.

B: No, Joe is not rich.

Subjective estimation relative to contextual standard

(54) I find that Joe is rich.

Multidimensional predicates

(55) A: The book is interesting.

B: No, the book is not interesting.

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