

6 Narrative and Point of View

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We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. “The king died and then the queen died” is a story. “The king died, and then the queen died of grief” is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it . . . Consider the death of the queen. If it is in a story we say “and then?” If it is in a plot we ask “why?”

(Forster 1927: 30)

6.0 Questions and Answers

- (1) Why do you think both linguists and philosophers find narrative and point of view interesting?

Questions about narrative structure, and discourse structure more generally, ultimately concern whether there are linguistic representations beyond the sentence level, an issue of import to linguists working at the semantics–pragmatics interface, as well as to philosophers of language. The question of modes of discourse goes back to at least Plato, with implications for philosophy of mind if narrative text is delimited in some way, to say nothing of how it is delimited (e.g. by relationship to time, event ontology, or causality). At the same time, issues of point of view in natural language interpretation have loomed large, in both linguistics and philosophy, across several empirical domains. In this chapter, we introduce a puzzle involving an interaction between how tenses and predicates of personal taste (PPTs) are used in narrative discourse. After pinning down which notions of point of view are sensible in these domains, we develop a solution that may help us understand larger architectural questions about narrative structure.

- (2) What recent developments in linguistics and philosophy do you think are most exciting in thinking about narrative and point of view?

Recent relativist treatments that split utterance and assessment times have provided new tools for understanding the core properties of PPTs (MacFarlane 2014). These have also provided useful for tackling certain

puzzling tense uses (Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2008; Anand & Toosarvandani 2017, 2018, 2020; Bary, this volume). We believe the additional degrees of freedom afforded by relativism offers a framework for attacking the puzzle in this chapter and enables an understanding of the interaction between tense and PPTs that is more nuanced than would have been possible before.

- (3) What do you consider to be the key ingredients in adequately analyzing narrative and point of view?

Relativist semantics for tense and PPTs are necessary ingredients for solving the puzzle introduced in this chapter. But a theory of narrative structure is needed, in addition, that yokes together the point of view encoded in these two domains. We offer the beginnings of such a theory grounded in the pragmatic conventions underlying the narrative genre. Building on the results from the psychology of collaborative storytelling (Edwards & Middleton 1986) and from discourse analysis (Labov & Waletzky 1966), this theory provides a top-down structure for narratives, in which events are described from a unitary perspective.

- (4) What do you consider to be the outstanding questions pertaining to narrative and point of view?

One set of questions involves the appropriate formalization of the theory of narrative structure offered. What is the appropriate formal framework for encoding perspective in narratives so that it interfaces appropriately with the intentions and expectations of the speaker (author) and hearers (readers)? How does this framework relate to other formal discourse models (based in, for instance, questions under discussion or discourse representation theory)? A more explanatory question is also relevant here: why is narrative structured in the way it is and not another way?

Another set of more specific questions has to do with the semantics for tense and PPTs. While we advance relativist semantics for both kinds of linguistic expressions, much remains to be understood. For tense: Is the temporal perspective encoded by present and past tense in English shared by their correlates in other languages? How is the point of view represented in so-called “narrative” tenses related to the notions introduced in the chapter? For PPTs: How is the judge for these expressions determined in narratives, and how might this underlie judge selection in other discourse genres? To what extent do related expressions (e.g. epistemic modals) track PPTs in narratives or require distinct perspectival-taking mechanisms?

6.1 Setting the Scene

As any reader of a novel or short story knows, the events in a narrative can be described in more than one way. The point of view, or perspective, can

shift many times in the course of even a single narrative, sometimes from one sentence to another. When theorists use terms like “point of view” or “perspective,” though, they may have different ideas in mind. In many cases, point of view is meant *logically*, to represent an implicit argument or parameter necessary for the evaluation of a relational predicate, as is sometimes invoked for positionals like *left* and *behind* or the temporal landmark for tense. In other cases, the term is meant to invoke something more cognitive or experiential, such as the epistemic or evaluative state of some salient protagonist, or the embodied experience of a situation (as in the inside–outside distinction discussed in work on mimesis, e.g. Vendler 1982; Walton 1990; Recanati 2007).

While undoubtedly all these perspectival notions are constituents of the aesthetic effect of a narrative, from the point of view of philosophy of language and formal semantics the central questions are about how such categories intersect the structure of natural language: Are there forms or constructions that privilege particular kinds of perspective? Do these forms or perspectives interact? And how do they connect with what makes narrative genres so apparently replete with perspectival switching?

In this chapter, we explore these questions by examining a previously undiscussed interaction between temporal perspective, in the form of the *historical present*, and evaluative perspective, in the form of *predicates of personal taste*. By historical present, we mean the noncanonical use of a present tense to describe a past event (see also Bary, this volume) and exemplified below.

- (1) If the funeral had been yesterday, I could not recollect it better [...]. Mr. Chillip **is** in the room, and **comes** to speak to me. “And how is Master David?” he **says**, kindly. I **cannot** tell him very well. I **give** him my hand, which he **holds** in his. (Dickens, *David Copperfield*)

While the historical present clearly changes the logical perspective for tense, it is often claimed to do more, giving the effect that the narrator, the reader, or both are witnessing events before their eyes. It is, thus, a fitting vehicle for exploring how logical perspective shifts may coincide with other notions of point of view.

Our puzzle starts from one of the central issues in the literature on predicates of personal taste (PPTs): disagreements involving individual-standard-dependent predicates like *delicious* or *fun* seem to be *faultless* (Kölbel 2003), that is, they have no clear fact of the matter. Consider the following toy dialogue:

- (2) [A and B are tasting a bottle of cider at an apple orchard.]
 A: This cider is delicious!
 B: No, it’s not delicious.

Intuitively, what is delicious to A here need not be delicious to B, and this is sufficient to allow neither A nor B to be making a mistake despite their seemingly contradictory beliefs.

There is little reason to think this kind of perspective-taking has much to do with what an author does by deploying the historical present. And yet, the two interact, as can be seen by embedding the disagreement above in a joint oral narrative like (3), where A and B together describe a shared experience.

- (3) C: [talking to A and B] How was your vacation?
 A: Well, after we arrive in Paris, we take a bus to the Normandy coast. We visit an apple orchard.
 B: They have their own cider. It's delicious!
 A1: No, it **isn't** delicious.
 A2: No, it **wasn't** delicious.

In this context, the faultlessness canonically associated with PPTs varies with the tense of A's response. If A uses the simple past, as in the A2 response, the sense of faultlessness can persist. However, if A uses the present tense, as in the A1 response, the disagreement never seems faultless: either she or B has made a mistake about the taste of the cider at the orchard. In short, A can only disagree faultlessly by using the past tense.

The solution to this puzzle, we will advance, lies in the pragmatic conventions that shape the narrative genre. To motivate these conventions, we will draw on the literature on joint oral narratives within psychology. A key empirical generalization comes from Edwards and Middleton's (1986) seminal study of collaborative story telling. They show that the participants engaged in such enterprises are strongly motivated to collaboratively construct a story line. However, after a consensus version of what happened has been reached, participants are free to (faultlessly) share their own take on the significance of those events to themselves or others. We take this perspectival structure to characterize narratives in general, a generalization which we state as follows:

- (4) **Narrative Perspectival Generalization (NPG):**
 Assertions in the *complication* of a narrative are all evaluated relative to the same perspective. Assertions in the *evaluation* are evaluated relative to speakers' own perspectives.

In framing this generalization, we draw on Labov and Waletzky's (1966) theory of narrative structure. This foundational work within the linguistic discipline of discourse analysis includes a place, not just for a sequence of event descriptions, what Labov and Waletzky call a *complication*, but also for some component conveying the significance of those situations to conversational participants, what they call an *evaluation*. While a unitary perspective is enforced in the complication, speakers' perspectives are permitted to diverge when the broader significance of these events is being considered in the evaluation.

The puzzle in (3) forms the empirical foundation for the NPG, whose effects might be hard to discern in single-authored written narratives. We argue that those effects are revealed in such joint oral narratives, where there are multiple speakers whose points of view can, in principle, diverge. However, a linguistic theory of this contrast, involving tense and PPTS, needs more than just this empirical generalization. It requires a formal system that can represent the pragmatic principles underlying narrative structure in such a way that they meaningfully interact with the semantic theories of the relevant phenomena. The existing theories of discourse structure within formal semantics, reviewed by Bary, Hunter and Thompson, and Pavese (this volume), make nontrivial claims about the point of view invoked by grammatical and lexical aspect, but they do not enable an understanding of the interaction between tense and appraisal. We instead turn, in Section 6.2, to Roberts's (2012) notion of a *strategy of inquiry*, a sequence of questions representing the conversational goals of a discourse that directs the contributions that participants can make. We offer a way to encode the division between complication and evaluation, along with the perspectival limitations these come with, in a strategy of inquiry for narratives.

To connect this theory of narrative structure to the contrast in (3), we introduce a semantics for PPTS in Section 6.3. First, we survey *contextualist* and *relativist* approaches, aiming to uncover their respective understandings of faultless disagreement. We adopt a relativist approach, in which the notion of propositional content is revised to include a place for a perspective point (Kölbel 2003; Lasersohn 2005; MacFarlane 2014). While there are substantive differences amongst relativist accounts, they all attribute faultlessness to *heteroperspectival* appraisal – evaluation relative to distinct perspectives – while nonfaultless disagreement arises from *homoperspectival* appraisal – evaluation relative to a single perspective. Ultimately, we build our account on MacFarlane's bicontextual semantics for PPTS, where the relevant perspective point is a parameter, not in the context of utterance, but a context of assessment.

To derive the contrast in (3), a semantics for tense is also required. A recent line of work, which we discuss in Section 6.4, has sought to capture certain unexpected tense uses, including the historical present, by deploying a bicontext (Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2004, 2008; Eckardt 2012; Anand & Toosarvandani 2017, 2018, 2020). In our extension of Sharvit's bicontextual semantics of tense, present and past tense describe reference time intervals relative to the time of the assessment context. With both PPTS and tense sensitive to the context of assessment, albeit to different parameters, a path to the solution for our puzzle opens up. The NPG can be cashed out as a requirement, encoded in a strategy of inquiry, that the complication of a narrative be evaluated from a unitary context of assessment. In a nutshell, the present tense leads to nonfaultless disagreement

when it describes past events, as in (3), because its semantics tightly binds the temporal location of an event to the contextual parameter relevant for appraisal. The past tense permits a distal temporal point of view on the events described, and so it is compatible, outside of complications, with appraisal involving past events from present perspectives.

It is important to point out that, while the past tense can be used in (3) to disagree faultlessly, it does not have to be. The simple past in English permits faultless disagreement, though a speaker can also use it, like the historical present, to disagree nonfaultlessly. In Section 6.5, we explore this flexibility, tying it to the broader distribution of past tense forms in narrative. While the historical present is restricted to complications, the simple past can be used throughout a narrative (Wolfson 1979: 171–172; Schiffrin 1981). We revise the existing semantics for past tense to enable this flexibility, engendering a new perspective on the crosslinguistic variation in tense usage.

6.2 The Structure of Narratives

We can start with what a narrative is. A narrative can be transmitted in a written form (e.g. *David Copperfield*) or orally (e.g. Aesop's fables or the Panchatantra before they were committed to paper). The events described can be part of an imagined world (a novel) or the actual one (a biography). And for oral narratives, these can be narrated by just a single speaker or jointly by more than one person, as (3) is.

Despite these differences, all narratives describe events, the individuals participating in them, and where these events and individuals are located in time and space. There is no necessary correspondence between how these elements are structured within the story world (what narratologists call the *fabula*) and how they are described in the narrative (the *syuzhet*). Mismatches between them could in principle involve any aspect of an event or individual that can be described. But, temporal correspondences between the story world and narrative are particularly salient, perhaps due to the important role that events play in scaffolding our understanding of a story.

Since the sequence of descriptions in a narrative is dictated entirely by the act of speaking or writing, the temporal ordering of events in a story world, whether imagined or real, must be inferred by hearers and readers. A narrative can describe a sequence of events iconically in a forward-moving fashion through *narrative progression*, as in (5a). Or, the temporal order can fail to correspond to the narrative order, with events temporally overlapping or even inverted through *backshifting*, as in (5b).

- (5) a. Max stood up. John greeted him.
b. Max fell. John pushed him.

It is these temporal mappings which have primarily animated formal semanticists' investigations of narrative. The theories they have developed can be divided between two main approaches: *reference time theories* and *discourse coherence theories*. We review these briefly below, though reference time theories are discussed further by Bary (this volume) and discourse coherence theories by Hunter and Thompson (this volume) and Pavese (this volume).

To make progress on our puzzle, we will argue for a theory of narrative which, unlike reference time or discourse coherence theories, encodes the goals of narrative production. We will review certain empirical generalizations from discourse analysis and psychology that will allow us to begin to understand what the speakers in narratives, both monologic and dialogic, are aiming to do. And these generalizations, once constituted as pragmatic conventions of the genre and formalized in the question-under-discussion framework (Roberts 2012), will provide a path to understanding how the historical present can be deployed in a narratives, and how this leads to a lack of faultlessness with PPTs.

6.2.1 *Formal Semantic Treatments of Narrative*

While formal semanticists have investigated the temporal properties of narratives, developing theories to account for them, they have not necessarily aimed for a theory of narrative.

Reference time theories, for instance, have a relatively restricted scope, seeking primarily to derive the temporal inferences in a narrative from how tense finds a referent in the discourse (Partee 1984; Dowty 1986; Hinrichs 1986; Webber 1988; Caenepeel 1989), as in an anaphoric theory of tense (Partee 1973). Within many of these theories, the variability in temporal relations is traced to lexical and grammatical aspect. The first two sentences of (6), for instance, are understood as taking place one after another, because they are eventive. By contrast, the last two sentences in (6) are interpreted as temporally overlapping the preceding sentences, since they are stative.

- (6) He went to the window. He pulled aside the soft drapes. It was a casement window. Both panels were cranked out to let in the night air. (after Hinrichs 1986: 67)

Reference time theories might seem, at first, well furnished to solve the puzzle posed by (3), given the deep connection they posit between narrative structure and tense. However, their notion of perspective is not particularly well-suited to handle a contrast in faultlessness.

Reference time theories assume a single narrator's perspective, with the narrative representing their beliefs about the temporal order of events (even if this order is also reflected in the perceptions of a protagonist, as Dowty and Caenepeel contemplate). These theories thus posit a relatively slight formal

machinery that includes no explicit place for the speaker-author. But this simplification also prevents these theories from extending to joint oral narratives, like the one in (3), which have more than one speaker. If the possibility or impossibility of faultless disagreement with PPTs depends on the individualistic perspective inherent to appraisal, then these individuals and their perspectives must find their way, somehow, into the structure for a narrative.

The goals of discourse coherence theories are, by contrast, more general, aiming to uncover the principles that organize texts of all types (Halliday & Hasan 1976; Hobbs 1979, 1990; Mann & Thompson 1988; Lascarides & Asher 1993; Kehler 2002; Asher & Lascarides 2003). They posit an inventory of primitive *coherence relations* between sentences, containing temporal information as well as other kinds of information (e.g. causal, spatial), as described by Hunter and Thompson (this volume) and Pavese (this volume). The temporal inferences between sentences in a narrative come from which coherence relations are inferred, rather than being rigidly tied to the aspectual properties of the sentences. When no coherence relation can be inferred, a discourse is infelicitous, as in the defective narrative in (7): it is simply not clear why these events are described in the way they are.

(7) ? My car broke down. The sun set. (Lascarides & Asher 1993: 463)

Discourse coherence theories have more room, in principle, for developing an account of the faultlessness contrast in (3), since they aim for a general understanding of why texts cohere. In general terms, the historical present would only be coherent when deployed in a joint narrative if the perspective taken precludes the possibility of faultless disagreement. Since coherence, or the lack thereof, depends on the specific inventory of coherence relations adopted, as well as a calculus for combining them, saying something about faultlessness disagreement would require that discourse coherence theories make reference in some fashion to the primitives underlying faultlessness.

While it may be possible to enrich a discourse coherence theory like Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (Asher & Lascarides 2003) in this way, we pursue a different path here. A core property of narratives relevant for our puzzle, we believe, involves what speakers are trying to do when they describe a sequence of events. This intentional structure suggests a top-down organization for narratives, which we formalize within Roberts's (2012) *question-under-discussion* framework. This is, in principle, compatible with an analysis of narrative in terms of discourse coherence, with the intentional structure being layered onto the network of coherence relations connecting a narrative.¹

¹ To this point, various rapprochements between question-under-discussion and discourse coherence theories have been attempted (Roberts 2016; Hunter & Abrusán 2017; Kamp 2017).

6.2.2 *Toward a Theory of Narrative Structure*

In the question-under-discussion (QUD) framework, questions represent the goals of conversational participants (see Westera this volume). For a typical information-seeking exchange, the goal might, for instance, be to answer the question *What is the way things are?* These questions, which represent the shared goals of speakers and hearers, can be introduced explicitly, signaled covertly through prosody or other linguistic means, or just inferred. Both conversational participants' contributions and their expectations about these contributions are involved in inferences about the question under discussion.

As Roberts points out, no discourse comprises answers to some randomly selected set of questions. Conversational participants work together in a systematic fashion towards reaching their final goal. She proposes that a *strategy of inquiry* is the way they do this: it comprises the QUD that is the discourse's overall goal, along with a sequence of other QUDs that they plan to use to answer it. It is possible, we think, to characterize narrative in terms of a conventionalized strategy of inquiry. In other words, what goes wrong in a defective narrative like (7) is that we, as readers, cannot infer a suitable strategy of inquiry based on just the two sentences provided.

What might this strategy of inquiry be? Labov and Waletzky (1966), in their influential analysis of oral narratives, show that these are conventionally divided into several parts, illustrated by the narrative below. After an initial *orientation* (8a), the *complication* describes the main series of events (8b); this is always accompanied by an *evaluation*, which conveys the broader significance of these events (8c). (These can be followed by a *resolution*, and then a *coda*.)

- (8)
- a. [...] We were all going out for lunch // it was our birthdays // and we were C.I.T.'s // so we were allowed to.
 - b. We borrowed someone's car // and we got BLOWN OUT. [...] So we asked some guy // t' come over an' HELP us. // So he opens the car // and everyone gets out except me and my girlfriend. // We were in front // and we just didn't feel like getting out. // And all of a sudden all these sparks // start t' fly. // So the girl says, // 'Look, do you know what you're doing? Because y' know um ... this is not my car // an' if you don't know what you're doing, // just don't DO anything.' // And he says, // 'Yeh, I have t' do it from inside.' // And all of a sudden he gets in the car, // sits down, // and starts t' turn on the motor.
 - c. We thought he was taking off with us // We really thought- h- he was- // he was like real- with all tattoos and smelled- an' we thought that was it! hhh // But he got out hhh after awhile. I really thought I was gonna die // or be taken someplace far away. It was so crazy, // because we couldn't call anybody. // It was really funny. (Schiffrin 1981: 47–48)

Formal semanticists have been primarily interested in the complication, which is comprised primarily of event descriptions with an iconic temporal ordering. Changing the order of the sentences in this *narrative spine* changes their temporal order, though the complication can also contain additional *satellite* material that is not temporally ordered relative to the narrative spine.

Labov and Waletzky argue that the evaluation is just as integral to the construction of a coherent narrative as the complication. It assigns an external significance to the events described in the story world. They identify two ways in which evaluations can be realized in narratives. In (8), the evaluation is *external*: it is a distinct textual segment following the complication, in which the speaker exits the story world, characterizing the events contained within it for the hearers. They suggest an evaluation can also be integrated into the complication itself. In such an *internal* evaluation, the event descriptions themselves give significance to the story, making its point clear. They can do this relatively indirectly, by inviting the addressee to infer the importance of those events on their own, rather than telling them directly.

Building on these empirical generalizations, we suggest that narratives are the product of a conventionalized strategy of inquiry, an initial version of which we state in (9): the questions it contains correspond to the different components of a narrative identified by Labov and Waletzky.

(9) **Narrative Strategy of Inquiry (NSI; initial version):**

A narrative is the product of a strategy of inquiry to answer a QUD, which contains at least the question *What is the way things are (in the story world)?*

The evaluation emerges from answering whatever QUD the entire strategy of inquiry is dedicated to resolving. This must involve some sequence of event descriptions, a requirement that is encoded by having one of the questions in the strategy be *What is the way things are (in the story world)?* There might be any number of substrategies for answering this question depending on the complexity of the complication. For the forward-moving sequence comprising the narrative spine, the substrategy might be: *What happened first? What happened second? . . .*; for satellite descriptions, the substrategy might include questions like *What was it like then?* or *Why did that happen?* (see also von Stutterheim & Klein 1989; van Kuppevelt 1995; Onea 2016; Velleman & Beaver 2016; Kamp 2017; Riester 2019). If the evaluation is internal, this might be all that the strategy of inquiry for a narrative contains. But if the evaluation is external, there will need to be additional questions, possibly organized in substrategies of their own, explicitly relating the events described to the highest-level QUD.

Under this view, the problem with the defective narrative in (7) is that the QUD at the root of the entire strategy of inquiry cannot be inferred based solely on the information that is provided. It is clearly possible to understand how the two sentences are related to one another in order to answer the question *What*

are the way things are? But without saying more, it is simply not possible to understand what higher-level QUD this is directed toward answering. For the NSI to be explanatory, actual narrative strategies of inquiry have to be more restrictive than this schematic one. It should be pointed out that there is, in general, no problem with two-sentence narratives,² as the invited six-word science fiction stories in (10)–(11) from *Wired* magazine demonstrate.³

- (10) Corpse parts missing. Doctor buys yacht. (Margaret Atwood)
 (11) Easy. Just touch the match to (Ursula K. LeGuin)

Based on our knowledge about who the authors are and the context in which these stories are presented, we can infer the QUDs these narratives are dedicated to answering. Klauk et al. (2016) suggest that, for (10), this is *Who did it?*, the conventional goal of a whodunit detective story. The inference involved here is clearly complex, and Klauk et al. observe that we probably cannot even arrive at this conclusion until after reading both sentences in the narrative.

The short narrative by Ursula K. LeGuin illustrates a different point about what is, and is not, required in a narrative strategy of inquiry. The events described need not reach any sort of intuitive finality, what in literary studies is called *narrative closure*. In (11), events are, in fact, described only incompletely for humorous effect. Carroll (2007: 4) treats narrative closure informally as a sensation that arises “when all of the questions that have been saliently posed by the narrative get answered.” Klauk et al. make clear that the questions that must be answered for narrative closure to arise are only those that “have the plot . . . as an object” (p. 45). If we take these, roughly, to resolve the question *What is the way things are (in the story world)?* in the NSI, it is clear then that this strategy does not require that a narrative provide a “complete” description of events in any sense. What the NSI does require, however, is what Klauk et al. refer to as *tellability closure*, the sense that the narrative has a point. They refer to Labov and Waletzky’s observation that oral narratives always have an evaluation. This requirement is encoded in the NSI, since a strategy of inquiry’s aim, in Roberts’s sense, is to answer a given QUD. So, while narrative closure may not be required, depending on what questions are in the strategy of inquiry, the presence of an evaluation, which gives rise to tellability closure, is necessary for a narrative to be complete.

The NSI is, by design, somewhat schematic. It is silent about the relationship between the question that is answered in the complication and the higher-level QUD the entire strategy is dedicated to. This freedom is needed to capture the wide variety of functions that narratives serve. A speaker may describe some

² For the following discussion, we are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for referring us to Klauk et al. (2016), which insightfully discusses several of the topics we consider.

³ “Very short stories,” *Wired*, November 1, 2006. www.wired.com/2006/11/very-short-stories/ (accessed May 11, 2020).

sequence of events to convey something about who they are, as in a personal anecdote. Or, a narrative may be used to convey a prescription that the hearer-reader should follow, as in Aesop's fables. In origin myths, the narrative serves to explain why the world is the way it is within a given ideological or belief system. In the fictional written narratives in (10)–(11), their goal is circumscribed by the relatively narrow conventions of specific literary genres (a whodunit or thriller). Given the wide-ranging goals of narratives, it seems only appropriate that certain aspects of the NSI are filled in by more specific conventions.

At the same time, there are some necessary characteristics of narratives, which have not been included in the initial version of the NSI in (9). These come from looking at joint oral narratives, which exhibit a particularly interesting combination of properties: they are narrated by more than one speaker, whose individual contributions are easily distinguishable. While joint oral narratives are not, as a genre, attended to much by linguists, they are widely studied in research on human psychological processes, including language development, belief formation, episodic recall, collective memory, well-being, and social identity (see, e.g. Edwards & Middleton 1986; Hirst et al. 1997; Holmberg et al. 2004; Kellas 2005; Ekeocha & Brennan 2008; Pinto et al. 2018). One persistent finding in this literature is that the collaborative nature of these enterprises produces a strong motivation for consensus about the story line. For instance, in Edwards and Middleton's seminal work on the topic, eight acquaintances were asked to recall the plot and memorable episodes of the movie *E.T.* The resulting narrative was analyzed for a wide variety of linguistic markers of dialogue structure, metanarrative negotiation, and social function. Edwards and Middleton note that participants quickly established a routine: first, providing essentially chronological description, frequently in the historical present, and then after this plot outline, engaging in a more free-wheeling, temporally inconsistent sharing of what they found memorable or significant about the film. In other words, participants first collaboratively constructed the complication of the story, interspersed with some evaluative commentary, and then engaged in (external) evaluation. In the complication portion, the motivation for consensus was so strong that it even frequently carried over into negotiations over the evaluative commentary, which included PPTS, so that there was a consensus perspective on those issues as well. In contrast, during the final evaluation, there was far less of this. Participants could share their own private opinions without any negotiation, agreeing to disagree.

Joint oral narratives, it turns out then, hew rather closely to a particular set of pragmatic conventions, stated in (4). The event descriptions in the complication must all be evaluated relative to a single shared perspective. By contrast, contributions in the evaluation are relative to the individual perspectives of speakers, which may coincide or diverge, as the case may be.

(4) **Narrative Perspectival Generalization (NPG):**

Assertions in the complication of a narrative are all evaluated relative to the same perspective. Assertions in the evaluation are evaluated relative to speakers' own perspectives.

While this generalization is motivated by findings about joint oral narratives, it plausibly characterizes all narratives. Joint oral narratives simply provide a way of seeing the generalization in a way that is not possible with other kinds of narratives. They have multiple speakers who can have, in principle, divergent perspectives. In a monologic narrative, by contrast, where there is a sole speaker-author, there is only ever a single perspective to represent.

This means, then, that the NPG should be incorporated into the NSI. We do this by relativizing different QUDs in the strategy of inquiry to different perspectives. The highest-level QUD is evaluated relative to the utterance event, while the subquestion for the complication is evaluated relative to a salient perspective point that we represent, for now, as ρ .

(12) **Narrative Strategy of Inquiry (NSI; revised version):**

A narrative is the product of a strategy of inquiry to answer a QUD **relative to the utterance event**, which contains at least the question *What is the way things are (in the story world) relative to ρ ?*

This enforces a shared perspective for the event descriptions in the complication. But contributions directed toward resolving the highest-level QUD will allow diverging points of view, as these will be evaluated relative to distinct utterance events, whose speakers and their perspectives may diverge.

6.2.3 *Tense in Narratives*

The contours of a solution to our puzzle should now be emerging. Disagreement with the historical present is not faultless in (3) because the events in the complication of a narrative are described from a unitary perspective. This attributes the absence of faultlessness, in other words, to the perspectival properties of narratives. Of course, we still need an understanding of how tense and PPTs are sensitive to this particular kind of perspective-taking, and the remainder of this chapter will establish just this. Building on recent developments in the formal semantic and philosophical literatures, we will provide a semantics for tense and PPTs, which makes them both sensitive to the perspective point invoked by the complication in a narrative, represented simply as ρ above.

For PPTs, it is more clear what direction this line of inquiry will take, given their more transparent perspectival sensitivity. For tense, this is perhaps somewhat less obvious. In contemporary theories of tense, which build on the work

of Reichenbach (1947) and Klein (1994), it is commonplace for this grammatical category also to encode a type of temporal perspective. Any tense must minimally locate the reference time relative to a time coordinate that can, at least sometimes, be identified with the “now” of an utterance. Fairly standard denotations are given in (13) for present and past tense (cf. Kratzer 1998: 101).

- (13) a. $\llbracket \text{PRES}_n \rrbracket^{c,g} = g(n)$; defined iff $g(n) \subseteq \text{TIME}(c)$
 b. $\llbracket \text{PAST}_n \rrbracket^{c,g} = g(n)$; defined iff $g(n) < \text{TIME}(c)$

The present tense locates an eventuality *at* the temporal perspective point, while the past tense locates an eventuality *before* it. Under attitude predicates, this time coordinate is the “now” of an attitude holder (Abusch 1997).

As Bary (this volume) discusses, the relatively simple semantics in (13) confronts a problem with the historical present, which in root clauses does not describe eventualities not located at the time of utterance. In one line of thinking, this variability can be traced to the temporal perspective that is part of the meaning of tense (Schlenker 2004; Eckardt 2012; Anand & Toosarvandani 2017, 2018). Rather than locating the reference time relative to the “now” of the actual utterance, tense locates it with respect to a temporal coordinate that can be located at the utterance event or float free. Under this view, the historical present arises when it is dissociated from the utterance time, thereby allowing for the description of nonpresent eventualities. It is this temporal perspective point that we will propose is associated with ρ in the NSI in (12).

Some initial evidence in support of this possibility comes from the distribution of the historical present in oral narratives. As Schiffrin (1981) shows, following earlier observations by Wolfson (1979: 171–172), the historical present is essentially found only in complications. In a corpus of 73 oral narratives, she finds *no* occurrences of the historical present in external evaluations or codas, with only a few instances in orientations (3 percent of verbs). The historical present appears almost entirely in complications (on 30 percent of verbs, or 381 out of 1288). In the narrative in (8), too, it appears only in the complication. This distributional restriction has a plausible source in the perspectival properties of narratives. If the present tense can only describe past events when the temporal perspective point at which it locates events is divorced from the utterance event, and if this temporal coordinate is related, in some fashion, to the unitary perspective point present in the complication, then we might expect the historical present to only show up inside complications.

This is admittedly somewhat suggestive so far. We will be returning to the semantics for tense in Section 6.4, advancing a formal proposal based on our own earlier work, that incorporates an additional time parameter. This will serve, as we will see, to explicitly connect the temporal perspective invoked by

the historical present to the appraisal inherent to PPTS. But before we do this, we first need a better understanding of these latter expressions.

6.3 Point of View in Predicates of Personal Taste

The past decade and a half has seen a renewed attention, in both formal semantics and the philosophy of language, to subjective expressions in natural language. There has been a particular focus on predicates of personal taste (PPTS) (Kölbel 2003; Lasersohn 2005): expressions like *tasty* or *beautiful* which, intuitively, describe objects in terms of characteristics that vary from individual to individual. What is tasty or beautiful to one person need not be the same for others, and there are many cases on which there is likely no consensus.

There are three interconnected puzzles that PPTS pose for conventional truth-conditional semantics. First, if the standards for taste and beauty are perspectival, the foundational question is how that perspective is represented. Second, whatever that representation of perspective is, it must be flexible enough to allow people not simply to assert perspectivally-situated claims, as A does in (14), but to also disagree with such claims, as B does.

- (14) [A and B are tasting a bottle of cider at an apple orchard.]
 A: This cider is delicious!
 B: No, it's not delicious.

Intuitively, in the *heteroperspectival* dialogue in (14), A and B are making claims about the cider relative to their own perspectival standards. So it is not clear why this should be construed as a coherent disagreement. Compare this to a parallel dialogue using the expression *local*, which is also intuitively speaking perspectival, though not to a standard of taste, but a locative *origio*.

- (15) A: [in Los Angeles] This cider is from a local farm.
 B: [in New York] No, it's {not from a local farm, from the east coast}.

In contrast to (14), (15) is coherent only if A and B are referencing the same *origio*. If, for example, they reference their different coasts, the polarity particle *no* is not licensed. Given this contrast, PPTS must have some property beyond general perspectival-dependence, which interacts with the pragmatics of dialogue to allow for heteroperspectival disagreements.

This point brings us to the third puzzle, the one of central concern to this chapter. The dialogues in (14) and (15) vary, not only in whether they allow heteroperspectival disagreement, but also in the objectivity of the disagreement. In the case of (15), there does seem to be a fact of the matter that is in dispute: one of the two parties is mistaken. In the case of (14), by contrast, many people report that it allows for instances where there is no mistake: both

parties can be equally correct in their claims. It is this state of the discourse that Kölbel (2003) terms *faultless disagreement*, which he describes as follows:

- (16) A faultless disagreement is a situation where there is a thinker *A*, a thinker *B*, and a proposition (content of judgment) *p*, such that:
- a. *A* believes (judges) that *p* and *B* believes (judges) that not-*p*
 - b. Neither *A* nor *B* has made a mistake (is at fault).

The problem, then, is how *A* and *B* can believe what seem to be contradictories without one being somehow in error.

These three questions – how perspective is represented for PPTs, how heteroperspectival disagreements are possible with PPTs, and how heteroperspectival disagreements can be understood as faultless – have led to a rich theoretical landscape (see MacFarlane 2014; Lasersohn 2017 for detailed discussions). For our purposes, it is useful to consider three approaches: *contextualist relativism*, *utterance-sensitive relativism*, and *bicontextualism*.⁴ On all three accounts, PPTs are, at least at some conceptual level, dyadic predicates holding of an object and some perspectival component. Suggestive evidence for this position comes from the fact that, in addition to their “bare” uses, many PPTs allow *overt experiencer* phrases such as *to me* or *for her*, which make the perspective explicit (Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; Bylinina 2017).

6.3.1 Contextualist Approaches

In contextualist approaches, the perspectival component is typically treated as a variable in logical form, akin to a pronoun.⁵ In typical usage, this pronominal is identified with the speaker, so that the PPT is interpreted as an assertion from the speaker’s perspective, what Lasersohn (2005) calls an *autocentric* use.

Under this account, the logical form of a sentence on an autocentric use varies with the utterer, as does the content of the sentence. To illustrate, the logical forms for *A* and *B*’s assertions in (14) can be schematized as follows:

- (17) a. PRES the cider be delicious x_2
 b. PRES the cider not be delicious x_9

Pronunciation notwithstanding, these two propositions are logically independent. *A*’s assertion is roughly equivalent to *The cider is delicious to A* (if x_2 refers to *A*), and *B*’s assertion to *The cider is not delicious to B* (if x_9 refers to *B*).

⁴ There is a long-standing terminological debate in this literature regarding what counts as relativism; see MacFarlane 2014 for discussion. MacFarlane’s terms for our approaches is indexical contextualism, nonindexical contextualism, and relativism.

⁵ It could also involve an indexical like *I*, a distinction that is not central here.

This makes it possible for them to be simultaneously true, and hence for no fault or mistake to arise on the part of either interlocutor.

However, as Kölbel (2003) notes, contextualism achieves this result without explaining why the dialogue in (14) feels like a disagreement, or why ellipsis and polarity particles (i.e. expressions like *yes* and *no*) are possible in hetero-perspectival disagreements with PPTs but not with perspectival expressions like *local*. More pointedly, as Lasersohn (2005) notes, hetero-perspectival disagreements seem markedly worse with overt experiencers.

- (18) A: The cider is delicious to me.
B: #No, it's not delicious to me.

That overt experiences do not pattern with the implicit perspective of *delicious* is a deep problem for contextualist accounts, since they would naturally receive the same treatment as implicit perspectives.

Thus, while simple contextualism avoids fault in disagreements with a PPT, it leaves unclear how there is even a disagreement in the first place. One response is *group contextualism* (DeRose 1991; Anand 2009; Moltmann 2012; Pearson 2013). It posits that the implicit perspective in these cases belongs to a group containing both A and B (and perhaps others), as illustrated in (19).

- (19) A: The cider is delicious to {us, people like us}.
B: No, it's not delicious to {us, people like us}.

This dialogue is coherent and is, moreover, construed as a disagreement. However, it accomplishes those goals at the cost of giving up the explanation for faultlessness, since now the contents of A and B's assertions are the same.

The fundamental challenge for contextualist accounts, then, is that the contents of utterances with PPTs contain the perspective point. In reaction to this, a large family of approaches has sought to remove the perspective point from propositional content. In this way, the content of two claims might be directly related (as logical opposites) without giving up faultlessness.

6.3.2 *Relativist Approaches*

For relativists like Kölbel (2003), Lasersohn (2005), and MacFarlane (2014), propositional content is revised to directly include a notion of perspective, to which some expressions are sensitive. Propositions under this view correspond not to world-time pairs, but to judge-world-time triples. Expressions like PPTs are sensitive to both the judge and world-time coordinates; nonsubjective expressions, like *Californian*, are sensitive only to the world-time coordinates.

- (20) a. $\llbracket \text{delicious} \rrbracket^{c, (j, w, t), g} = \lambda x. 1$ iff x is delicious to j in w at t
b. $\llbracket \text{Californian} \rrbracket^{c, (j, w, t), g} = \lambda x. 1$ iff x is Californian in w at t

Thus, as desired, A's and B's assertions in (14) are contradictories (i.e. if one is true at index i the other must be false at i): one predicates that the cider is delicious to the judge of the evaluation index and the other that it is not.

In an intensional logic, the truth of an assertion in context is determined by evaluating the propositional content of the assertion relative to a contextually supplied world, typically the world in which the assertion was made. Lasersohn and MacFarlane both propose that assertions are likewise evaluated relative to a contextually supplied judge. But they differ in what sort of context supplies that judge, and what contextual flexibility exists. For Lasersohn, the context of utterance determines the judge, just as it determines the world of evaluation.

(21) **Truth in a Context:**

α is true in context c iff $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c, \langle \text{JUDGE}(c), \text{WORLD}(c), \text{TIME}(c) \rangle, g} = 1$.

Under his approach, the context of utterance crucially negotiates how the truth of judge-dependent material is calculated. In MacFarlane's subtly different view, that task is taken up not by the context of utterance, but the context of assessment, a distinct context whose role is to fix parameters of appraisal and evaluation. For him, then, truth is defined not at a context, but at a *bicontext*.

(22) **Truth in a Bicontext:**

α is true at utterance context c_1 and assessment context c_2 iff $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c_1, \langle \text{JUDGE}(c_2), \text{WORLD}(c_1), \text{TIME}(c_1) \rangle, g} = 1$.

MacFarlane's goal is to capture a range of behaviors linked to individuals standing in a state of disagreement. To understand his concern, consider how relativist treatments of PPTs handle the coherence of heteroperspectival disagreements. We have seen that because judges enter propositional content, it is possible to say that the contents of A's and B's assertions are contradictories. But the same could be said for a temporally-variant proposition. If A says *It is noon*, and then hours later B says *It isn't noon*, there is no sense of disagreement. What explains this contrast between judges and times? Without a satisfying answer to this question, it is not clear that relativist treatments improve much beyond contextualist ones in deriving a sense of disagreement. For MacFarlane, the answer comes from the bicontextual pragmatics of truth: since the context of assessment supplies the judge, judge-sensitive propositions will differ from those that are purely time-sensitive. Thus, only the former show an ability to consider the truth of an assertion relative to a judge different from the one supplied by the context of utterance.⁶

⁶ MacFarlane's main empirical target is the *retraction* of taste claims, in which one rejects a taste claim after one's tastes change over time. He argues that only bicontextualism correctly predicts that retraction is mandatory when one's tastes change.

We will ultimately build our account in terms of a bicontextual semantics, though MacFarlane's particular philosophical commitments lead to a view of the context of assessment that is not empirically borne out. As a result, we will end up arguing for a bicontextual semantics with a bit more expressive freedom, which we will exploit in building an account of faultless disagreement and our core contrast in (3). We can start by scrutinizing how these two flavors of relativism handle cases where the judge is, intuitively, not the speaker.

6.3.3 *Relativism and Exocentric Readings*

While the contextual world of evaluation is not typically very flexible, Lasersohn argues that the contextual judge has considerable freedom. Beyond autocentric uses, it also has *exocentric* uses, as in questions posed to the addressee (23) or in discussions of some relevant protagonist (24).

- (23) A: [asking B about a book B is reading] Is the book good?
 (24) Mary: How did Bill like the rides?
 John: Well, the merry-go-round was fun, but the water slide was a little too scary. (Lasersohn 2005: 672)

In contrast, MacFarlane assumes that the assessment context is quite rigid, providing only the assessment standard of the assessor at the time of assessment. For exocentric uses, he follows Stephenson (2007), who proposes that, while autocentric uses are relative to the contextually supplied judge, exocentric uses are derived via variables in the logical form, as under contextualist accounts. As evidence for this hybrid system, Stephenson observes that exocentric readings do not readily lead to coherent heteroperspectival disagreements.

- (25) Sam: The tuna is tasty.
 Sue: (#)No, it isn't! It's not tasty at all! (Stephenson 2007: 521)

Stephenson notes that if Sam intends exocentrically to reference a salient cat's judgment of the tuna, and if Sue (knowing this) then brings in her perspective, Sue's statement is incoherent. Under the theory that exocentric readings require variables that lead to judge-invariant propositional content, such mismatches are predicted, while under the one where exocentric readings arise from the context of utterance, they are not.

But a dialogue like (25) can be felicitous depending on the individuals that are referenced by the interlocutors. Consider the scenario in (26), where two parents are discussing how a certain child enjoyed their birthday party. It seems much more acceptable here for another child to offer their own opinion.

- (26) Parent A: How was the cake at the party?
 Parent B: It was delicious.
 Child: No, it wasn't! It was disgusting.

This suggests that what is going on in exocentric–autocentric mismatches is not as clear-cut as Stephenson suggests, and that the infelicity of (25) is not a matter of mismatching logical forms, but rather of overall discourse coherence.⁷

In addition, based on tests furnished by MacFarlane, as well as Anand and Korotkova (2018), exocentric readings of bare PPTs can be shown to be distinct from those with overt experiencers. MacFarlane notes that PPTs with overt experiencers evaluate the predicate relative to a standard determined by the overt experiencer’s standards of taste in the index of evaluation, while bare PPTs do not. One vivid illustration comes from a contrast he observes in counterfactual conditionals. In (27a), the counterfactual state of affairs involves some change in the structure of horse manure that would make it tasty relative to the assessor’s real-world standards of taste. In contrast, (27b) admits a state of affairs where the speaker’s standards of taste are different from their real-world standards.

- (27) a. If horse manure were tasty, I would never go hungry.
 b. If horse manure were tasty to me, I would never go hungry.
 (after MacFarlane 2014)

Similarly, Anand and Korotkova show that overt experiencers change the signature of the *acquaintance inference* that PPTs impose. Bare PPTs in typical autocentric assertive contexts give rise to the inference that the speaker has some direct evidence for their judgment (Stephenson 2007; Pearson 2013). This inference disappears under operators like epistemic *maybe* (Ninan 2014).

- (28) a. #The cake was delicious, but I never tasted it.
 b. The cake maybe was delicious, but I never tasted it.
 (Anand & Korotkova 2018: 56)

In sharp contrast, PPTs with overt experiencers do not lose the acquaintance inference, behaving exactly analogous to other predicates with experiencer arguments, including psych-predicates, such as *like*.

- (29) a. #The cake maybe was delicious to me, but I never tasted it.
 b. #I maybe liked the cake, but I never tasted it. (Anand & Korotkova 2018: 56)

These facts do not depend on autocentric judgment: exocentric judgments also require acquaintance and show the same signature of obviation.

- (30) a. #Hobbes’s new food was tasty, but he never ever tried it.
 b. Hobbes’s new food maybe was tasty, but he never tried it.
 c. #Hobbes’s new food maybe was tasty to him, but he never tried it.
 (after Anand & Korotkova 2018: 63)

⁷ It is worth noting that the oddity of Sue’s assertion in (25) fails to improve if Sue says instead *I didn’t like it at all!*, which suggests that the problem is about the plausibility of the relevance of a QUD like *What do you and the cat think about the tuna?*

Returning now to the counterfactual examples in (27), we see the same pattern. Consider a situation where two parents are discussing their child's picky eating habits. An overt experiencer, as in (31b), allows the parents to consider a state of affairs where the child's eating habits are different from in the real world.

- (31) a. If our dinner had been tasty, he would have eaten it.
 b. If our dinner had been tasty to him, he would have eaten it.

Importantly, the bare PPT form in (31a) does not: it only allows consideration of a state of affairs where the subject of the PPT itself changes composition.

In sum, if exocentric readings involve variables, as Stephenson and MacFarlane suggest, bare PPTs in counterfactuals and acquaintance-obviation environments should pattern with their overt experiencer counterparts when the PPT is interpreted relative to an exocentric perspective. This prediction does not seem to hold: both exocentric and autocentric perspectives show the same contrast with their corresponding overt experiencer forms.

6.3.4 *Relativism and Faultless Disagreement*

We take the facts above, about exocentric readings, as evidence for Lasersohn's approach, where the context may set the judge to a perspective distinct from the speaker's. This is a position, we should note, that is compatible both with utterance-sensitive relativism and bicontextualism. Importantly, if we adopt this view, faultless disagreement can be blocked with exocentric readings, but only if the exocentric perspectives that speakers are employing are the same: in such a case, it is impossible for a proposition and its negation to be true relative to the contexts of utterance/assessment.

Taking stock now, in surveying the literature on PPTs, we have argued that judge contextualism is the most challenged approach and that bicontextual relativism is the least, while utterance-sensitive relativism needs to explain the contrast between PPT disagreements and temporally sensitive sentences like *It is noon*. At the same time, we have argued based on contrasts between overt and covert experiencer data that exocentric readings should both be treated relativistically, that is, that the context of assessment should be free to choose judges other than the speaker's.

But regardless of what one might conclude from disagreements and overt experiencers, when it comes to explaining the presence or absence of faultlessness, contextualist and relativist accounts are remarkably consonant in their explanation. Faultlessness comes from *heteroperspectival evaluation* (whatever its source), which allows intuitively contrary propositions to be simultaneously true because they are evaluated relative to distinct perspectives. And, in turn, the lack of faultlessness comes from *homoperspectival evaluation* (whatever its source), precisely because in such cases the contrary propositions cannot be simultaneously true (relative to the same perspective).

6.4 A Minimal Working Solution

We can now return to the puzzle in (3). It has two elements: on the one hand, the lack of faultlessness with the historical present and, on the other, the possibility of faultlessness with the simple past. We are ultimately committed to three theses to account for both of these:

- (1) The complication in a narrative enforces a single perspective, while the evaluation admits diverse perspectives, i.e. the NPG in (4).
- (2) Faultlessness with PPTs arises from heteroperspectival evaluation (independent of auto- vs. exo-centrism), while nonfaultlessness arises from homoperspectival evaluation.
- (3) The historical present is only compatible with homoperspectival evaluation, while the simple past is more flexible.

The first two we have already addressed. Only the third remains. Why should the historical present have such a restriction? And why should it differ from the simple past in this regard? Ultimately, we believe the answers to both questions have their roots in the semantics of tense, as it interacts with the structure of a narrative. Thus, we aim to reduce the lack of faultlessness with the historical present to the fact that it is only employed in the complication of a narrative, and the possibility of faultlessness with the simple past to its availability in all parts of a narrative. We have already seen, in Section 6.2.3, that these tenses are indeed distributed in this way. But how should this be expressed formally? To answer this question, we turn to a more extensive formal analysis of tense.

6.4.1 A Bicontextual Semantics for Tense

We introduced a standard semantics for tense in (13) above and saw how it runs into problems with the historical present. If the present tense is sensitive to the time of the context and if this context encodes aspects of the utterance event, then it is hard to understand how this tense form could ever describe a past event. At the same time, there is no evidence for a distinct historical present morpheme. The historical present is just one *use* of a tense form that is also used for other purposes, including the canonical (utterance-time indexical) present and the so-called play-by-play (or broadcaster) present.

In Anand and Toosarvandani (2017), we argue these three uses can be unified, building on Sharvit's (2004, 2008) bicontextual semantics for free indirect discourse, as long as: (i) tense is sensitive to a time in the context of assessment, as in (32), and (ii) this time of assessment can be set relatively freely. Pronominal indexicals, e.g. *I*, are sensitive instead to the utterance context.

- (32) a. $\llbracket \text{PRES}_n \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = g(n)$; defined iff $g(n) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a)$
 b. $\llbracket \text{PAST}_n \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = g(n)$; defined iff $g(n) < \text{TIME}(a)$

Because tenses are sensitive to the assessment context, we cannot maintain MacFarlane's Truth in a Bicontext (22), which sets the time coordinate of the index based on the utterance context. We need a more general notion, one which explicitly evaluates an expression relative to the assessment context:

- (33) **Truth in a Bicontext (revised):**
 a is true at utterance context u and assessment context a iff
 $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{u,a,(\text{JUDGE}(a), \text{WORLD}(a), \text{TIME}(a)),g} = 1$.

While Sharvit takes the two contexts to be identical at the root level, we propose, following Schlenker (2004), that the time of assessment is set pragmatically in root contexts (see Bary, this volume for discussion):

- (34) a. Canonical present: $\text{TIME}(a) = \text{TIME}(u)$
 b. Historical present: $\text{TIME}(a) < \text{TIME}(u)$
 c. Play-by-play present: $\text{TIME}(u)$ is a final subinterval of $\text{TIME}(a)$

When the time of assessment is the time of utterance, the canonical present results. When it is anterior to the actual speech time, the historical present results. And when it abuts the actual speech time, the play-by-play results.

With bicontextualism, in short, we can retain an indexical theory of the present tense in English, treating its various uses as arising from the mapping between the utterance time and the time that tense is indexical to. One component of this analysis is that the width of the time of assessment is also contextually determined. For the canonical present, the width is infinitesimal, small enough that only stative eventualities can occur. But for noncanonical uses, the interval is set freely, and it is for this reason that both the historical and play-by-play present allow episodic events while the canonical present does not. We suggest that for the historical present, in particular, the interval can be set wide enough to accommodate the entire story. What this means concretely is that sentences in historical present discourses require the same temporal perspective: they are evaluated relative to the same time of assessment.

This suggests, given what we observed about judges above, that the NSI in (12) can be rewritten more precisely. The QUDs in the complication of a narrative are all evaluated relative to a single context of assessment, while the QUD that gives rise to the evaluation is evaluated relative to the utterance context.

- (35) **Narrative Strategy of Inquiry (NSI; final version):**
 A narrative is the product of a strategy of inquiry to answer a QUD **relative to the context of utterance u** , which contains at least the question: *What is the way things are (in the story world) relative to some context of assessment a ?*

For a QUD evaluated relative to a given context, the only relevant answers will be ones that describe eventualities relative to that same context, assuming a

sufficiently fine-grained conception of relevance. Thus, all assertions in the complication will be evaluated relative to a single assessment context.

We can see how the semantics of tense interacts with the NSI by looking at a simplified version of the joint oral narrative in (3).

- (36) A: We arrive in Paris. (i)
 A: We take a bus to the Normandy coast. (ii)
 A: We visit an apple orchard. (iii)
 B: They have cider. (iv)
 B: It's delicious. (v)
 A: It **isn't** delicious. (vi-a)
 It **wasn't** delicious. (vi-b)

The sentences in (iii) and (iv) have the approximate logical forms in (37a) and (37b), respectively.

- (37) a. PRES₃ PFV we₈ visit an apple orchard
 b. PRES₄ PFV they₉ have cider

Each sentence is evaluated relative to an utterance context, which is updated throughout the narrative. But it is also evaluated relative to an assessment context, which we have posited does not change across the complication of a narrative. Thus, these two sentences have the following truth conditions:

- (38) a. $\llbracket \text{PRES}_3 \text{ PFV we}_8 \text{ visit an apple orchard} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} =$
 $\exists e \exists x [\text{orchard}(x) \wedge \text{visit}(e) \wedge \text{Agent}(g(8), e) \wedge \text{Theme}(x, e)$
 $\wedge \tau(e) \subseteq g(3)];$
 defined only if $\text{SPEAKER}(u) \leq g(8)$ and $g(3) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a)$
 b. $\llbracket \text{PRES}_4 \text{ PFV they}_9 \text{ have cider} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} =$
 $\exists e [\text{have}(e) \wedge \text{Agent}(g(9), e) \wedge \text{Theme}(\text{cider}, e) \wedge \tau(e) \subseteq g(4)];$
 defined only if $g(4) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a)$

Each sentence commits the speaker to the existence of a particular kind of eventuality, with the presuppositions of the indexical elements constraining these eventualities. In both (38a) and (38b), the reference time interval the present tense denotes is inside the assessment time. Perfective aspect further requires, again in both, that the eventuality lie within the reference time interval. Since a is constant across the complication of a narrative, according to the NSI, $\text{TIME}(a)$ is as well. So, by the narrative architecture of complications, the present tense locates both the visiting and possessing eventualities within the same assessment interval, which by the pragmatic conventions for historical present precedes the times at which these sentences were uttered.

6.4.2 Adding PPTs

We can now turn to the final sentence of the discourse in (36). We treat *delicious* as a predicate of events, as in (39), for compositional simplicity.

$$(39) \quad \llbracket \text{delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = \\ \lambda x \lambda e. 1 \text{ iff } \text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(i), e) \wedge \text{Theme}(x, e)$$

Sentence (v) accordingly has the logical form in (40a) and the resulting truth conditions in (40b).

$$(40) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. PRES}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \\ \text{b. } \llbracket \text{PRES}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = \\ \quad \exists e[\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(i), e) \wedge \tau(e) \subseteq g(5)]; \\ \quad \text{defined only if } g(5) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a) \end{array}$$

The perspective for the PPT here is the judge of the index (i), which at the root level is determined by whichever assessment context is relevant for the complication of this narrative. Per Truth in a Bicontext (33), (40a) is evaluated against the sequence $\langle u, a, a, g \rangle$, so that its semantics reduces to the following:

$$(41) \quad \llbracket \text{PRES}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,a,g} = \\ \exists e[\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(a), e) \wedge \tau(e) \subseteq g(5)]; \\ \text{defined only if } g(5) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a)$$

When A follows up with sentence (vi-a), disagreeing using the historical present by saying *It isn't delicious*, only a nonfaultless disagreement is possible. To see why, consider the logical form and truth conditions for A's assertion:

$$(42) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. NEG PRES}_6 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \\ \text{b. } \llbracket \text{NEG PRES}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = \\ \quad \neg \exists e[\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(i), e) \wedge \\ \quad \tau(e) \subseteq g(5)]; \\ \quad \text{defined only if } g(5) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a) \end{array}$$

which, again given Truth in a Bicontext, yields the following semantics:

$$(43) \quad \llbracket \text{NEG PRES}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,a,g} = \\ \neg \exists e[\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(a), e) \wedge \\ \tau(e) \subseteq g(5)]; \\ \text{defined only if } g(5) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a)$$

As with the other sentences in the historical present, A's disagreement here will be added to the complication of the narrative. But then, as the NSI requires, the perspective must be the same as for B's original assertion. There is, as a result, no way for faultlessness to arise.

6.4.3 *Disagreements Using the Simple Past*

This deals with half of the puzzle posed by the joint oral narrative in (36). But what happens when A disagrees using the simple past, as in sentence (vi-b)? It seems that, by saying *It wasn't delicious*, A can disagree faultlessly.

The truth conditions for this sentence differ from those of its historical present alternative only in the presupposition triggered by tense:

- (44) a. NEG PAST₆ PFV it₁₀ be delicious
 b. $\llbracket \text{NEG PAST}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} =$
 $\neg \exists e [\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(i), e) \wedge$
 $(e) \subseteq g(5)];$
 defined only if $g(5) < \text{TIME}(a)$

The past tense requires that the reference time precede the assessment time. Given Truth in a Bicontext, (44) produces the following semantics:

- (45) $\llbracket \text{NEG PAST}_5 \text{ PFV it}_{10} \text{ be delicious} \rrbracket^{u,a,a,g} =$
 $\neg \exists e [\text{delicious}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(g(10), e) \wedge \text{Judge}(\text{JUDGE}(a), e) \wedge$
 $\tau(e) \subseteq g(5)];$
 defined only if $g(5) < \text{TIME}(a)$

This allows for a more complex set of interpretative possibilities. One is that the past tense has its canonical use, equating the assessment and utterance times. Then, A's disagreement cannot be construed as an addition to the complication, since it is not interpreted relative to the relevant assessment context. It does, however, allow A to make an assertion from an autocentric perspective. In this case, since the judges for B's and A's assertions are distinct, a heteroperspectival disagreement should result, and thus also a faultless disagreement.⁸

Since A's assertion is not part of the complication, it does not contribute to the consensus description of the story world. This seems intuitively correct. By using the simple past, A reveals her own perspective on the events described. What this contribution means dialogically is less clear, since it can signal a range of intents. The disagreement may be a proposal about the evaluation of the joint narrative; it might register a dissent to the collective appraisal; or, finally, it may be a comment outside the narrative entirely, simply stating the speaker's opinion. At this point, it not clear how these differ empirically.

One important question is how the identity of the consensus judge in a complication impacts this reasoning. Based on Edwards and Middleton (1986), it might seem reasonable to assume that this judge is a group containing the appropriate discussants in a conversation. However, this complicates our explanation for the faultlessness made available by using the simple past. Under our proposal, switching to the simple past requires a change in assessment context, which opens up the possibility of a change in judges. But a change may not be enough. If a PPT evaluated relative to a group judge is

⁸ A switch in assessment contexts does not force an autocentric judge, and hence would allow a nonfaultless disagreement. Whether the nonfaultless interpretation is actually available is not clear, but we do, importantly, predict the presence of faultless disagreement.

entailed to be true of its subgroups, when B says the cider is delicious to the group, it will be delicious to B and to A. But then a switch from B's group judge to A's autocentric judge is not enough, since B's claim precludes the truth of A's claim.

We can see two responses to this objection, the first a more nuanced view of what nonfaultlessness means in these dialogues, and the second a proposal that the common judge need not be the group, but rather a more abstract narrator.

Varieties of Nonfaultlessness Let us first consider nuancing nonfaultless disagreements.⁹ The assertions we are considering, and their judges in this context, are given below:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (46) | B: The cider is delicious. | $\text{JUDGE}(a) = A \oplus B$ |
| (47) | A: The cider isn't delicious. | $\text{JUDGE}(a) = A \oplus B$ |
| (48) | A: The cider wasn't delicious. | $\text{JUDGE}(a) = A$ |

We have already seen that, relative to any particular bicontext, (46) is contrary to both (47) and (48), so the distinction we are making is not about truth-conditional relations in a bicontext. However, B's goal in making the assertion in (46) is to make a claim about A and B's common judgment, a fact represented by the plural judge. In typical information-seeking exchanges, where the aim is to contribute novel information, asserting that one's interlocutors have a particular judgment runs afoul of the first-personal privilege judgments of taste typically have, and hence comes across as deeply coercive. But in joint oral narrative, making assertions about another author's judgment may simply be reporting what is a common belief of both authors already. In this regard, the assertions in (48) and (47) both start from the common belief that they share a common judgment. The disagreement is about what the common judgment is, but not whether there is a common judgment.

In contrast, the autocentric use in (48) is limited to A's judgments alone. In doing this, A makes no commitments as to a common judgment. In addition, because it does not obey the NSI, A's assertion is made outside the goal of joint narrative. It thus stands apart in two ways from the assertion that prompted it, and may thus be seen as a metanarrative signal about issues with the joint narrative. Indeed, this is precisely our feeling of the import of the disagreement in (48). B has made a claim about the joint judgment of A and B, and A's goal here is simply to react to the assumption that there is a joint judgment, saying simply that, as for A themselves, the cider is not delicious. In contrast, (47) goes further, claiming that the joint judgment is that the cider is not delicious. Thus, while both (48) and (47) lead to nonfaultless disagreements, their impacts on the development of the narrative are different. (47) will lead to a

⁹ This section is inspired by MacFarlane's (2014) discussion of different types of disagreement.

discussion about what the consensus position was, while (48) is an attempt to deny that there was a consensus to begin with, thus serving as a metanarrative comment about what can be part of the complication of the joint narrative.

Narrator Judges Another potential option to be considered for the judge in joint oral narratives is an abstract narrator. In this way, we could perhaps preserve faultless disagreement in some sense, since the narrator and any particular speaker would not necessarily be connected in a way that could preclude the narrator and the speaker from having differing judgments.

Such an avenue is especially attractive when we consider storytelling where the goal is to construct a fictional narrative. In such cases, there is no compelling reason to claim that PPTs report the judgments of the group. Moreover, the difference between historical present and canonical past disagreements dissolves and the canonical past seems to trigger the same kind of nonfaultless disagreement. Consider a version of our narrative in (36), cast as a fictional account:

- (49) A: Our story begins as a couple arrives in Paris. (i)
 A: They take a bus to the Normandy coast. (ii)
 A: They wander around, eventually stopping in an apple orchard. (iii)
 B: They have cider. (iv)
 B: It's delicious. (v)
 A: No, it **isn't** delicious. (vi-a)
 No, it **wasn't** delicious. (vi-b)

Both of A's possible responses, in (vi-a) or in (vi-b), now read as nonfaultless attempts to impose a different consensus view of the story. If this is the case, there must be a way for speakers to felicitously disagree about some storywide perspective, but where it is not possible to bring in one's own perspective. If the storywide perspective is the plural individual for the speaking group, it is hard to see why that would be. But if we recognize the possibility of an abstract narrator perspective, then the point would be that in fictional accounts one can disagree about the narrator's judgment, but talking about one's own perspective on something one is not acquainted with will be problematic.

The central problem with this account is that there is no clear notion of what the narrator requires, aside from being a perspectival repository (though see Eckardt 2015, 2021). Is this an individual who exists in some particular world or is it something more abstract, like a standard of taste? And do we require an abstract narrator for all narratives, including nonfictional ones? Though these are important narratological questions, we have not been able to operationalize them in a way that allows them to be tested. We thus simply note that, while this option is open to us, advancing it more seriously would require some motivation for the ontological sophistication it may lead to.

6.5 Narratives in the Past

In the preceding, we outlined a solution to our puzzle, one that could handle both why the historical present cannot be used to disagree faultlessly and why the simple past can. But we have yet to address another aspect of the joint oral narrative in (36). While A can make an assertion relative to her own auto-centric perspective by using to the simple past, A could also convey appraisal relative to the consensus judge with this tense form. That is, she can do with the simple past what she does with the historical present, disagreeing nonfaultlessly.

This perspectival flexibility could simply be a matter of what the judge of the assessment context is. The anteriority encoded in the standard semantics for the past tense in (32) absolutely prohibits a PPT from holding *at* the time of the context whose judge it is evaluated relative to. So, for sentence (vi-b) in (36), one option would be to allow the judge to remain the consensus judge, even while the assessment time is fixed to the utterance time. (The assessment context would thus not be completely identical to the utterance context.) Under this view, the flexibility in how the simple past is used simply boils down to variation in what the judge of the assessment context can be.

However, we think a more principled account is possible, linking this perspectival flexibility to more general facts about past tense usage in narratives. Consider an alternative version of (36), conducted entirely in the simple past:

- (50)
- | | |
|---|-------|
| A: We arrived in Paris. | (i) |
| A: We took a bus to the Normandy coast. | (ii) |
| A: We visited an apple orchard. | (iii) |
| B: They had cider. | (iv) |
| B: It was delicious. | (v) |
| A: No, it wasn't delicious! | (vi) |

Setting aside the disagreement in (v–vi), it is not clear, given our assumptions so far, how sentences (i) through (iv) comprise a coherent narrative. The restrictive formulation of the NSI requires a single context of assessment for all assertions in the complication. But we have assumed that, in its canonical use, the past tense identifies the assessment context with the utterance context. Since the latter advances in time with each speech act, so will the former. Thus, it should be impossible for a sequence of past tense sentences to comprise a complication, since the assessment context is different for each of them.

This is, of course, simply not the case: while (50) differs from its historical present counterpart, it does not differ in its coherence. This means that one or more of our assumptions must be relaxed. The tension here is between the semantics for the past tense in (32), which translates a fairly standard denotation into a bicontextual framework, and the NSI. In principle, either hypothesis

could be loosened or removed. We will try, however, to maintain the NSI in its present form in (35) and revise the semantics for past tense. This enables a common understanding of how the past tense can coherently be used in a narrative like (50) and why it is perspectiveally flexible, unlike the present tense.

6.5.1 Sources of Anteriority

In revising the semantics for past tense, we might look to the semantics proffered in the literature for other kinds of past meanings. One case of this is the past perfect, which intuitively conveys two levels of anteriority: it invokes a salient time anterior to the utterance time – what Reichenbach (1947) calls the “reference point” – which the event is itself anterior to. It is tempting to view this as a consequence of two morphemes, the past, responsible for anteriority with respect to the utterance time, and the perfect, responsible for the other case of anteriority. Kamp and Reyle (1993: 483–689) argue that both relations should be encoded in the semantics of tense, since this behavior is independent of the aspectual properties of a sentence. They observe that a sequence of sentences in the past perfect also exhibits narrative progression.

- (51) Fred arrived at 10. He **had gotten** up at 5; he **had taken** a long shower, **had got** dressed, and **had eaten** a leisurely breakfast. He **had left** the house at 6:30.
(Kamp & Reyle 1993: 594)

Kamp and Reyle introduce another perspectival point beyond the reference and utterance times, which is anchored to an event in the discourse: in (51), it is anchored to the arriving event described by the initial sentence.

Elsewhere (Anand & Toosarvandani 2017), we have argued that this perspective point can be assimilated to the assessment time, since an event described by the historical present can also serve as the anchor for the past perfect.

- (52) Rumors of Berlusconi’s crimes swirl. His advisors confront him. He scoffs. He **had paid off** the prostitute for her silence already.
(Anand & Toosarvandani 2017: 29)

All told, this would suggest the following semantics for the past perfect within a bicontextual framework:

- (53) $[[\text{P-PAST}_n]]^{u,a,i,g} = g(n)$; defined only if $g(n) < \text{TIME}(a) < \text{TIME}(u)$

Intuitively, it could be possible to see the simple past as an instance of this. All-past narratives would be coherent, then, because they are described as past relative to an assessment time that is itself anterior to the utterance time. However, there is a real contrast in temporal perspective taking between (50) and (51). In the past perfect example, there is a sense that there is a temporal vantage point (10 p.m.) relative to which the other events are being viewed.

In the simple past narrative, by contrast, that feeling is absent or at least not necessary.

An interesting constellation of properties has been described in this connection for past tense forms in German. Kratzer (1998: 105–106) observes that the German simple past (*Präteritum*) is, unlike its English counterpart, not felicitous out of the blue, while the German present perfect form (*Perfekt*) is. She proposes that the German simple past is strongly anaphoric to a temporal interval salient (thereby excluding it from out-of-the-blue uses), and requires that the event be contained *inside* this interval. She locates this sensitivity in the semantics of aspect (perfect vs. perfective aspect). However, as with the past perfect, this restriction may be better located in the semantics of tense. The simple past in German cannot be used to backshift relative to a salient past time (Dickey 2001: 88), a restriction it shares with the simple past in French and Dutch (Molendijk & de Swart 1999: 90–91).

- (54) a. ?? Max **fiel**. John **schubste** ihn.
 ‘Max fell. John pushed him.’ (Dickey 2001: 88)
- b. #Jean **mourut**. Max l’**assassina**.
 ‘Jean died. Max assassinated him.’ (Molendijk & de Swart 1999: 90)
- c. ?? Jane **verliet** me. Ze **werd verliefd** op een ander.
 ‘Jane left me. She fell in love with someone else.’ (Dickey 2001: 87)

This is not an idiosyncratic property of “narrative” past tense forms. The historical present also prohibits backshifting (Anand & Toosarvandani 2018): e.g. #*John dies. Max assassinates him*. This parallelism between the historical present and the simple past in these languages plausibly has its source in a shared sensitivity to the same time parameter.

Let us suppose, then, that in a bicontextual framework the simple past in German (as well as in Dutch and French) locates the reference time in the assessment time, which is itself located anterior to the utterance time. It realizes, in other words, a past tense morpheme that we can call the R (EMOTE)-PAST. Its semantics would differ from that for P-PAST in (53) solely in the relation between reference time and assessment time.

- (55) $[[\text{R-PAST}_n]]^{u,a,i,g} = g(n)$; defined only if $g(n) \subseteq \text{TIME}(a) < \text{TIME}(u)$.

This past tense morpheme is a bicontextual cousin of the present, which also locates the reference time inside the assessment time. As the assessment time is not the utterance time, it must be a salient past time, which means the R-PAST must be temporally anchored. At the same time, since the reference and assessment times are related by inclusion, we do not have the requirement for a salient “intermediate” past that we had for the past perfect. In sum, R-PAST serves as an excellent candidate for the German simple past and similar “narrative” past tenses like the Dutch and French simple past. Next, we argue that it is also part of the meaning of the simple past in English.

6.5.2 *A Revised Semantics for Past Tense*

If we took the English simple past simply to encode R-PAST, like its German counterpart, then we would have a straightforward explanation for why an all-past narrative, like (50), is coherent according to the NSI. The assessment time can be set to a salient interval containing all the eventualities described in the complication, precisely as we have argued for narratives in the historical present. In addition, we can account for why the simple past allows for the option of homoperspectival evaluation, relative to the consensus judge. With the R-PAST, the simple past can describe a past eventuality without having to shift from the assessment context of the complication. A PPT could then be evaluated relative to the judge parameter of this context.

But the simple past in English cannot merely encode R-PAST. If it did, there would no contrast with the historical present in the availability of faultless disagreements with PPTs. Said another way, we would not derive the fact that the simple past allows heteroperspectival evaluation (though it does not require it). Additionally, we might expect it to be infelicitous out of the blue, like its German counterpart. It seems that we have to embrace some kind of polysemy for the simple past in English. It could be ambiguous (as Kratzer 1998; Kamp & Reyle 1993 have, in fact, proposed), between PAST and R-PAST morphemes. Or, it could have an underspecified meaning: one candidate for this U(NDERSPECIFIED)-PAST is given below.

$$(56) \quad \llbracket \text{U-PAST}_n \rrbracket^{u,a,i,g} = g(n); \text{ defined only if } g(n) < \text{TIME}(v), \\ \text{where } v = a \vee v = u$$

With this semantics, the U-PAST simply says that the reference time is anterior to some bicontextual time, leaving underspecified which coordinate this is. For example, if $v = u$, a classical indexical past results that does not mention the assessment context at all. It could thus be used in an out-of-the-blue setting or in a narrative without violating the NSI, since the assessment time does not constrain the tense's denotation at all. If $v = a$, then a backshifted past becomes possible when the assessment time is contextually set to a time anterior to $\text{TIME}(u)$.¹⁰ This polysemy, regardless of which version is adopted, corresponds to the perspectival flexibility exhibited by the simple past.

6.5.3 *Considering an Alternative*

It is important to consider whether this approach, which posits polysemy for the past tense in English, along with crosslinguistic variation in its semantics,

¹⁰ One question is whether this flexibility could run afoul of the restrictions on embedded tenses in free indirect discourse that motivate Sharvit's (2008) account.

is ultimately more explanatory than the alternative. The standard semantics for past tense in (32) could be maintained by restricting the scope of the NSI, making it a claim not about coherent narratives simpliciter, but merely about coherent narratives in the historical present.¹¹ This alternative would amount to a pragmatic principle that directly mandates a homoperspectival stance for one use of the simple present. It would be completely silent about other tense forms: it would have nothing to say about a disagreement in the simple past, whether following a sequence of historical present sentences, as in our original joint oral narrative in (36), or whether in an all-past narrative, as in (50).

Empirical coverage aside, there are a couple reasons to think that the alternative, which posits a direct mapping between a tense use and homoperspectival appraisal, is not on the right track. In the account we have advanced, the connection between the historical present and nonfaultless disagreement is indirect: the historical present is restricted to the complication because of the semantics of present tense. If this restriction means anything, there should be evidence for it outside of disagreements with PPTs. We would expect evaluative language, in general, to be treated as part of the “facts” of the story when it is expressed using the historical present. There is some intuitive evidence for this idea. Consider the following historical present story:

- (57) My neighbor and I start hanging out more after work. We go to see the new *Star Wars* movie later that month. But in the theater, they suddenly seem cold and distant. They stop returning my calls.
- a. They are falling in love with me, but I don’t know that.
 - b. They were falling in love with me, but I didn’t know that.

We have the intuition that, in (57a), the fact that the neighbor is falling in love with the protagonist is part of the story; it is a crucial plot point that will propel some of the story events. For (57b), by contrast, we do not have that feeling: the prominent reading is one where the falling in love is a *post facto* explanation for why things happened. This contrast is rather subtle, but it does follow from the indirect account as we have advanced it. It is less clear how the same observations would be cached out in the alternative, which only posits a connection between the historical present and homoperspectival evaluation.

The indirect route, moreover, makes interesting prediction about PPTs in the “narrative” past tenses in German, French, and Dutch. For these languages, we suggested that there was a distinction, parallel to the historical vs. canonical present contrast, that was encoded as a semantic distinction between two past tense morphemes. We thus predict that the simple past in German, French, and Dutch should trigger nonfaultless disagreement, while the present perfect should allow faultless disagreement. Importantly, this is attributed, not to a

¹¹ We thank an anonymous reviewer for urging us to consider this option more explicitly.

stipulation about tense–judge interactions, as the direct alternative would have, but to a general constraint on narrative genres. It may be that, ultimately, the account we have advanced is too ambitious. But it does make clear empirical predictions, showing at the same time what work needs to be done next.

6.6 Conclusion

We began this chapter with a novel puzzle about how tense and predicates of personal taste (PPTs) interact in the performance of joint oral narratives. We have used this puzzle to mount an argument for the linguistic importance of structures for oral narratives identified in the discourse analysis and psychology literatures. Namely, PPTs and other perspectival expressions are evaluated differently in the complication and evaluation portions of narrative, a claim we have called the Narrative Perspectival Generalization (4).

We have cashed out the NPG theoretically by combining a bicontextual theory of perspective (MacFarlane 2003, 2014; Sharvit 2004, 2008) with Roberts's (2012) theory of discourse structure, leading us to a constraint on the strategies of inquiry for narratives, which makes mention of both bicontextual perspectives (35). In turn, we have shown how the linking of grammatical tense to the assessment context allows us to account for the contrast between (historical) present and (canonical) past disagreements in joint oral narratives.

In closing, we would like to reflect on the larger implications of the empirical puzzle we have focused on and the proposals we have advanced. Perhaps the most immediate question that arises is the status of the NSI within a theory of linguistic competence. Ultimately, we see the NSI as a claim about what speakers know about the pragmatics of the narrative genre. Genres ultimately are shaped by cultural practice, and hence are matters of convention. It may be that there are very few, if any, cognitive or properly linguistic constraints on possible genres. Nevertheless, we believe that the conventions of a genre can make direct reference to linguistic structures, and thus the study of the structures of genres can provide indirect evidence for underlying linguistic structures. In the present case, the interaction of tense and faultlessness provides, we believe, strong evidence that temporal perspective and evaluative perspective are grammatically linked, a claim we have cashed out by making them both sensitive to the same object (the assessment context). Beyond that, we should understand that much of the surrounding structural dichotomizing – complication vs. evaluation, assessment vs. utterance context – is provisional, absent a theory of sufficient richness.

Hence, while our particular way of implementing that linguistic importance involved bicontextual parameters, our aim in this chapter was more general. We hope to have shown that a richer, more capacious notion of what constitutes narrative perspective is needed, one that engages with the intentional structure

of a narrative, and a sense of a narrative as a practice distinct from information exchange. While there is a substantial treatment of *Narration* as a coherence relation between discourse units within formal semantics and philosophy of language, very little has been done in these traditions to understand narrative as a larger intentional form of language use. We believe that there is real opportunity for progress in this arena. But this progress will only come by closely attending to the interaction with other perspectival notions by particular grammatical formatives (like the “narrative” tenses in German, French, and Dutch), as well as by undertaking more serious and sustained attempts to formalize the richer, more capacious notions of narrative structure found in discourse analytical, narratological, and psychological investigations of narrative discourse.

Such sustained, interdisciplinary examination will be necessary, we believe, to understand what narration is and why it has the character it does. While we have argued for a grammatical interaction between temporal and evaluation perspective in this chapter, our account, in essence, simply stipulates this interaction by making different sets of morphemes dependent on the same perspectival parameter. We have not touched the more important explanatory question of why things are organized this way and not another. In more naive discussions of perspective, the perspectival center is characterized, not as an abstract vantage point, but as some actual individual in the story world (see, e.g. Walton 1990). For such a view, it is not surprising that there is a unity of temporal and evaluative perspective. However, we have in Section 6.4 argued at some length that it is difficult to link the evaluative perspective with any particular set of individuals, even for autobiographical oral narratives, and more complex narratives clearly lack an obvious embodied perspectival center. It is thus surprising that tense and evaluation continue to track together formally, even when they are not linked to any clear individual. It may be that the narrator plays a crucial role here, and that even in cases where there is no actual person, there is some “counterfactual person” from whose vantage point the narration is simulated to take place. While we acknowledge the promise of this idea, moving from informal notions into something more substantive will require much more careful theorizing around narrators, and thus also the intentional structure of narration. We hope that this chapter has illustrated some potential payoffs of that task for linguists and philosophers of language alike.

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