

Differences of Taste

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Abstract. Disagreement about taste, as in (i), poses a challenge to traditional semantic theories.

- (i) CONTEXT. There's a cake on the table that A and B have tried. A liked it; B didn't.
 - a. A: This cake is tasty.
 - b. B: No, it's not tasty!

The puzzle is that there appears to be conflict, but it also seems possible that both speakers are right. This phenomenon has been called 'faultless disagreement'. In this paper I argue that our view of disagreement about taste should also cover disagreement about *appearances*, as in (ii).

- (ii) CONTEXT. As in (i).
 - a. A: This cake tastes vegan.
 - b. B: No, it doesn't taste vegan!

I present semantic evidence that taste and appearance predicates should be treated in a unified way. But there is a divide within appearance predicates, depending on whether the complement adjective ('vegan' in the example above) denotes an appearance-independent property. I argue that both kinds of appearance predicates can be involved in faultless disagreement, though for different reasons. Appearance predicates, I suggest, sometimes behave like taste predicates and sometimes like epistemic modal terms — both of which have been independently recognized as giving rise to faultless disagreement.

* Paper draft available upon request; please email rachelrudolph@berkeley.edu *