Compact course *Language and Metaphysics*

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Handout 5

**Part-Related Expressions*, Individual, Whole, Partly* and *Completely*, and the Part Structure of Content**

**1. Structured pluralities**

Structured pluralities are needed for different understanding of collective predicates that are not number-related and for distributive interpretation

(1) a. John compared the students.

b. John weighed the stones.

Reference to a Plurality:

Definite plurals stand for pluralities ‘as one’: sums, sets, collections…

Plural Reference:

Definite plurals stand for pluralities ‘as many’, they stand for several things at once.

Plural varables: *xx, yy*, …

Structured pluralities on the two approaches:

The Reference to a Plurality approach

The part structure of a structured plurality is the part structure of a sum driven by general principles of individuation, though now applied to integrity conditions provided by information of the NP used and possibly nonlinguistic information

The Plural Reference approach

Structured pluralities are pluralities ‘as many’ in a situation providing information about integrity of subpluralities (as many), where integrity conditions includes information about the use of definite NPs (*the men and the women*).

Number related predicates

have argument position for pluralities ‘as many’, to be filled in by several tings at once

*four*(dd)

*count*(John, dd)

Non-number-related collective predicates

have argument position for pluralities ‘as many’ and a situation of reference

*compare*(John; dd, s)

*weigh*(John; dd, s)

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**2. Part structure modifiers**

**2.1. *Individual(ly)***

(2) a. Semantics of *individual* within Reference to a Plurality

For an entity d, and a situation s,

*individual*(d, s) iff d is the sum of a set X of essential integrated wholes and no sum of a

proper subset of X is a part of d in s (or an element of D(s), the domain of s).

(2) b. Semantics of *individual* within Plural Reference

For entities xx and a situation s,

*individual*(xx, s) iff for every x, x < xx, x is an essential integrated whole and for no

entities yy, yy < xx INT(yy, s) and AT-LEAST-TWO(yy).

Adverbial modification

(3) a. John compared the students individually.

b. John weighed the stones individually.

*Individually* applies to an event-centered situation se involving only information about the event e described by the verb.

*individually*(dd, se):

no proper subpluralities of dd are integrated wholes in se, which means: may be involved in a collective subevent of e.

**2.2. *Whole* and *wholly***

(4) The whole collection is expensive.

Reference to a Plurality approach

*Whole*:

Meaning 1: maps entity to the mere sum of its (mereological) parts

Meaning 2: maps entity to the sum of its parts in the Aristotelian sense, i.e. including properties of form

Plural Reference approach

Meaning 1: maps entity to the plurality ‘as many’ of its (mereological) parts

Meaning 2: maps entity to the sum of its parts in the Aristotelian sense, i.e. including properties of form

*Wholly*: specifies that every part of the plurality is included in the event centered situation

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**3. Part structure modifiers of the sort *partly* and *complete(ly)***

*Partly*:

(5) a. The clouds have partly disappeared

b. The surface is partly black.

*Completely*:

(6) a. The clouds have completely disappeared.

b. The surface is completely black.

Meaning 1: all the parts

Meaning 2: highest degree

Multidimensonal part structure of events of disappearing:

* part structure induced by parts of the participant
* part structure induced by degrees of visibility/presence

Multidimensonal part structure of tropes of being black:

* part structure induced by parts of the participant
* part structure induced by degrees of blackness

Adverbs of completion expressing relations between particular events /tropes and types of events / tropes

*Partly*(e, E): e instantiated part of E, for some part structure of E

*Completely*(e, E): e instantiated part of E, for some part structure of E

Further observations:

No degree-related reading available for partly

Other related expressions: fully, entirely, in part, to some extent

Restrictions:

(6’) a. The surface is entirely black. (only participant-related reading)

b. ??? The clouds are fully black.

c. The project has been fully completed.

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**4. The part structure of content**

Yablo (‘Aboutness’): sentences / propositions do not just come with truth conditions, but also a subject matter, which makes up what the sentence/proposition is about.

What is subject matter?

Yablo: a pattern of crossworld variation (partitions of the space of possible worlds)

Fine: set of truthmaking situations

Part-of relation applies to content, underlies partial truth

(7) p is partly true iff part of p is true.

Partitive constructions applying to content

(8) a. part of / some of / all of the content of the sentence

b. part of / some of / all of what John said

c. part of / some of / all of what John believes

Interestingly, content is treated as mass, even if it consists of well-individuated situations:

(8) Part of / ??? Parts of what John said, namely that the students have passed the exam, is

true: Joe, Mary and Bill have passed the exam, though not John.

Expressions for partial truth

*Partly true, for the most part true, to a great extent true, halfway true*

(9) a. What John said is partly true.

b. John’s utterance is partly true.

c. John’s claim is partly true.

d. The sentence is partly true.

e. What John wrote down is partly true.

(10) a. What John believes is partly true

b. John’s belief is partly true.

c. What John claimed is to a great extent true.

d. John’s claim is to a great extent true.

Partial truth = truth of a part?

Yes for ‘pure contents’

(8) a. Part of John’s belief is true.

b. Part of what John believes is true.

c. Part of John’s claim is true.

Not for structured content bearers:

(9) a. Part of what John said is true.

b. Part of John’s utterance is true.

c. Part of the sentence is true.

Explanation

*Partially* relates entity to type of trope of being true

Semantics of *partially*:

x *is partially* A: x instantiates part of one of the part structures associated with being A

not: part of x is A.

Part structure associated with being A: content-related part structure

That is, *partially* does not directly involve part structure of subject referent, but part structure associated with being A

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