

# LAD Conferences

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L a b o r a t o i r e d e r e c h e r c h e s u r l e s a s y m é t r i e s d ' i n t e r f a c e s

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## Context and/or Anaphora

Indexical Expressions are always understood as used by their speakers to refer to things. On the other hand, several indexicals clearly have anaphoric uses as well; and there are a number of cases in human languages where the same forms when embedded do not behave as they would in isolation. One way of looking at these phenomena, advanced in particular in Philippe Schlenker (2003), is to hold that they involve "context shift."

It has been very useful to consider these phenomena. But I will argue here that context shift does not exist, and that having recourse to it is a misdiagnosis, and in part an artifact of two pieces of the formalism, namely: (i) the view that the fundamental task for semantics is the characterization of the notion 'S is true in context  $c$  in world  $w$  if and only if so-and-so (in  $c$  and  $w$ )', so that contexts are treated as if they could be objects of modification or quantification, and (ii) the restriction of anaphora to explicit linguistic forms, rather than including in this concept both argument positions and the forms that ultimately fill them. If, contrary to (i) and (ii), the object of inquiry is the target truth conditions of potential utterances by competent speakers, and implicit arguments (as in the case of Tense) are brought into the anaphoric picture, then context shift is out of the question (the context of an utterance is whatever it is); but the phenomena given in the literature fall out straightforwardly through the anaphoric use of indexicals, seen already in other forms, such as 'that  $F$ '.

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### Selected Publications

- Higginbotham, J. (1996). Appeared as "Competence With Demonstratives." *Philosophical Perspectives* 16 (2002). pp. 3-18. Also in Bjørn Ramberg and Martin Hahn (eds.), *Reflections and Replies: Essays on the Philosophy of Tyler Burge*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2003. pp. 101-115.
- Higginbotham, J. (2003). "Remembering, Imagining, and the First Person." Alex Barber (ed.), *Epistemology of Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 496-533.
- Higginbotham, J. (2006). "Truth and Reference as the Basis of Meaning." Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley (eds.), *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Language*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 58-76.
- Higginbotham, J. (2008). "Expression, Truth, Predication, and Context." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 16, 4. pp. 473-494. Also appear in Richard Schantz (ed.), *Prospects for Meaning*. New York: de Gruyter.

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