

"Descriptive Readings" of Indexicals and

Demonstratives Abstract:

Nunberg [1993] pointed out that indexicals and demonstratives have uses in which they allow the sentences they occur in to convey claims that don't *seem* to be about particular people, times, places and so on:

1. (uttered by Glenn standing at the newly opened door, scolding Tracy for opening the door so readily when she heard the doorbell) 'I could have been a murderer!'
2. (uttered pointing at the Vice President) 'He is usually a member of the same party as the President.'
3. (uttered by a condemned prisoner) 'I am traditionally allowed to order whatever I want for my last meal.' I provide a positive account of how the relevant readings arise, arguing that different mechanisms give rise to the readings in different cases.