

De Se Relativism

Andy Egan and Dirk Kindermann

In Kusch, Martin (ed.): *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Relativism*

Abstract

De se relativism claims that thought and talk about subjective matters such as personal taste or epistemic modality is best understood as a kind of *de se*, or first-personal, thought and talk. It says that claims about what's tasty, or what's epistemically possible, can take different truth values relative to different assessors, because such claims express *de se* contents that can be true of some assessors and false of others. This chapter presents the main motivations for *de se* relativism, its account of mental and linguistic content in terms of *de se*, centered-worlds propositions, the role of *de se* propositions in communication, and the view's similarities and differences with respect to a variety of other forms of contemporary relativisms.

1. Motivations for *de se* relativism

Consider the following two cases:

MIGHT: A and B are looking for the surveillance microphone. They haven't yet searched the desk. B says, "it might be in the desk". A says, "that's true – let's check there." C and D are monitoring the surveillance cameras (and microphone) in A & B's apartment. They aren't sure where the microphone is (E installed it, and is currently on break), but C was watching when E planted the microphone, and while she didn't see exactly where E put it, she saw that E never went near the desk. D, hand poised over the button that will scramble the emergency team, asks C, "is that true?" C replies, "no, it's not. No need to worry."

A flat-footed reaction to have about this case: When A said "that's true", she was attributing truth to B's assertion of "it might be in the desk", and she was correct to do so. When C said, "no, it's not" in response to D's question, "is that true?", she was attributing falsity to B's assertion of "it might be in the desk", and she was correct to do so.

TASTE: F and G, who are from Australia, are having breakfast. G says to F, "mm, vegemite toast is delicious". F replies, "that's true! Such a joy of a morning". At the next table, H and J, who are from the United States, overhear. J has never tried vegemite, but knows that H has. J turns to H, hand poised to lift a piece of vegemite toast to her mouth, and asks, "is that true?" H replies, "no, it's not. Vegemite toast tastes like feet."

A flat-footed reaction to have about this case: When F said "that's true", she was attributing truth to G's assertion of "vegemite toast is delicious", and she was correct to do so. When H said, "no,

it's not" in response to J's question, "is that true?", she was attributing falsity to G's assertion of "vegemite toast is delicious", and she was correct to do so.

A natural proposal for how to accommodate the flat-footed reactions: The propositions asserted with "might" claims and predicates of personal taste, are (at least in some contexts) the sorts of things that can take different truth-values relative to different assessors within the same world.

A relatively theoretically conservative way of implementing the natural proposal: the propositions people assert with "might" claims, and with predicates of personal taste, are (at least in some contexts) interesting centered-worlds propositions. That is: they're propositions that take truth-values relative to centered worlds (which we can think of as <world, time, individual> triples) rather than worlds, and that sometimes take different truth values relative to centered worlds <w,t,i> and <w,t*,i*>.

Cases like *MIGHT* and *TASTE* – in which there are two assessors within a world, one of whom seems as if they'd be correct to assess a particular utterance (or sentence in context) as true, the other of which seems as if they'd be correct to assess the same utterance as false – are one of the headline motivations for *de se* relativist views about some subject matter.

The other headline motivation is cases of (purported) faultless disagreement. This is more frequently appealed to in discussions of taste than of epistemic modals, so we'll focus on that kind of case, generating another example by tweaking the eavesdropper taste case:

*TASTE**: F and G, who are from Australia, are having breakfast. G says to F, "mm, vegemite toast is delicious". At the next table, H and J, who are from the United States, are sitting down to their own breakfast. J turns over to F and G's table, spitting out a bite of Vegemite, and says to them, "Vegemite toast is not delicious! This stuff tastes like feet."

A flat-footed reaction to have about this case: When G says "Vegemite toast is delicious" and J says "Vegemite toast is not delicious", they are disagreeing. (And they are disagreeing about whether Vegemite toast is delicious.) But nobody need be making a mistake: Both are (or on suitable fillings-in of the case, both could easily be) getting it right, "from their own perspective".

A natural proposal for how to accommodate the flat-footed reaction: The propositions people assert with predicates of personal taste, are (at least sometimes) the sorts of things that can take different truth-values relative to different assessors within the same world. So J is really denying the very proposition that G is asserting (hence disagreement), but that proposition is true relative to G and false relative to J, so G is correct to accept it, and J is correct to deny it (hence faultlessness).

Here's a relatively theoretically conservative way of implementing the natural proposal: the propositions people assert with predicates of personal taste (and with epistemic modals), are (at least in some contexts) interesting centered-worlds propositions.

2. The view

De se relativism (as advocated by Egan 2007, 2010, 2012, 2014 and Kindermann 2012, forthcoming – other views that may be counted as versions of *de se* relativism are advocated by Brogaard 2007, 2012, Stephenson 2007, 2008, Lasersohn 2005, 2016, and will be discussed in section 6) has two core commitments: a proposal about what kind of semantic contents to assign to certain sentences in context, and a proposal about the theoretical role of the assignment of one semantic content rather than another to a sentence in context.

De Se Relativism (DSR):

- SEMANTIC CONTENT: Certain sentences involving uses of epistemic modals and predicates of personal taste (among, perhaps, other expressions) semantically express, in context, interesting centered-worlds propositions.
- FOUNDATIONS: The semantic content of a sentence in context specifies, inter alia, the conventional uptake condition for that sentence in that context. This proposal about the theoretical role of semantic content requires a bit more explanation.

According to this proposal, a semantic theory for a language is in the business of associating declarative sentences in context with conventional *production conditions* as well as conventional *uptake conditions* or *acceptance conditions*. Production conditions are something that speakers are conventionally called upon to satisfy; uptake conditions are something that assessors are conventionally called upon to satisfy. Speakers' willingness to make an utterance tracks, inter alia, the production conditions of the utterance. Assessors' judgments of truth and falsity track (perhaps among other things – more later) their willingness to accept, or inclination to reject, an utterance's uptake condition. (We use "assessors" as a general term to cover both participants in the conversation in which the utterance takes place and eavesdroppers.)

For non-subjective declarative utterances, separating production and uptake conditions is not important. If we associate a possible-worlds proposition P with a sentence S in context c, it doesn't matter if we think of P as modeling, in the first instance, the sentence's production condition (for example, what the speaker has to believe in order to sincerely assert S in c) or its uptake condition (what the assessor has to accept in order to accept as true an utterance of S made by a speaker in c). If speakers are conventionally called upon not to say S in c unless (they believe) P, the predictable uptake effect, when assessors accept that the speaker is speaking truly, is that the assessor will come to believe P as well. If an assessor's acceptance of an assertion of S in c requires updating with P (if P models the uptake condition of S in c), then cooperative speakers who don't want to mislead will strive not to assert S in c unless (they believe) P. Either way, we predict that sincere assertors of S in c will believe that P is true, and that assessors who accept the assertion of S in c will update with P.

In the case of a *de se* relativist account of subjective utterances, such as in *TASTE* and *MIGHT* above, the difference between production and uptake conditions matters a great deal. If we associate S in c with an interesting centered-worlds proposition Q, it matters whether we think of Q as modeling, in the first instance, a production condition or an uptake condition. If take Q to model an uptake condition, that means that an assessor's acceptance of an assertion of S, in context of utterance c, requires the assessor to update with Q. This gives rise to the possibility that there are assertions that one assessor ought to accept, but another assessor in the same world ought to reject. That's because Q, being interestingly *de se*, could be true of one assessor and false of the other. It also gives rise to the possibility of assertions whose contents are true of the speaker but false of some assessor, and so which are properly accepted by the speaker, but properly rejected by the assessor.

If, on the other hand, we take Q to model a production condition, we don't get any of these predictions. The predictable uptake effect, for trusting assessors of an assertion whose production condition is (believing) Q, will be to accept that Q is true *of the speaker*. Importantly, it *won't* be to update with Q. And so the attribution of interestingly *de se* content to S in c won't, if we understand the attribution of content to be characterizing production conditions, predict that there will be any assertions that would be correctly accepted by one assessor and correctly rejected by another – whether Q is true of the speaker won't vary across assessors.

If we (a) take the semantically determined contents of declarative sentences to be in the business of, inter alia, modeling conventional uptake or acceptance conditions, and (b) assign interesting *de se* contents as semantically determined assertoric contents in context,ⁱ then we get a theory that predicts variation in truth-value judgments across assessors, as well as the possibility of faultless disagreement, in which two speakers assert sentences with incompatible acceptance conditions, each of which is true of the speaker. Thus each party to the disagreement is correct to accept their own assertion, and correct to reject the other's.

The combination of these two proposals says that the semantic content of a sentence in context specifies, inter alia, the conventional uptake condition for that sentence in that context, and that the semantic contents (in their contexts) of many uses of epistemic modal sentences and taste sentences are interestingly *de se*. It gives us a view that's responsive to, and well-positioned to explain, the peculiar phenomena from section 1.

Eavesdropper truth-value attributions:

When G says "Vegemite is delicious" in *TASTE*, she expresses an interesting centered-worlds proposition - at a first pass, the one that's true at $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff i is disposed (at t, in w) to enjoy the taste of Vegemite. (This is just a first pass. See Egan (2010).)

That's true of G, and also true of F (we suppose—after all, they're from Australia). So it's not only a good thing for G to assert but also a good thing for F to accept – accepting it would help F to locate herself more precisely in logical space. It's also a good thing for G and F to add to their stock of presuppositions in their conversation (to the stock of potential objects of belief that they

both accept, take each other to accept, take each other to take each other to accept, etc.—see Stalnaker 2002) – presupposing it will help them to zero in on their collective position in logical space, and on ways in which their individual positions are similar, and recognized to be similar. If we suppose that truth-value attributions track with willingness to accept and to add to conversational presuppositions, this explains why it makes sense for F to respond to G’s assertion with “that’s true”.ⁱⁱ

It’s not, however, true of H, nor is it true of J. (Neither H nor J is disposed to enjoy the taste of Vegemite.) And so it would be a bad thing for either H or J to accept. Since it’s false of H, she is correct to reject it, and by signaling her rejection of it, to warn J off of accepting it as well. If we suppose that truth-value attributions track willingness to accept (and inclination to reject) and to add (or reject the addition of) conversational presuppositions, this explains why it makes sense for H to respond to J’s request for a verdict about the truth-value of G’s utterance with “that’s false”. It is false for J and for H, and so H ought not to accept it (ought not to bring it about that she satisfies its conventional uptake condition), and ought to warn J off of accepting it as well.

The story about A, B, C, and D in *MIGHT* is similar: when B says, “it might be in the desk”, he expresses (at a first pass - see Egan 2007) the interesting centered-worlds proposition that’s true relative to $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff i (at t , in w) doesn’t have access to evidence that rules out the microphone’s being in the desk. That’s true of B, and it’s also true of A. So it makes sense for A to update with the content of B’s utterance, and to allow it to pass in to the stock of conversational presuppositions, and to signal his willingness to accept B’s utterance and update accordingly by saying “that’s true”. C and D’s evidential situation is different - they *do* have access to evidence that rules out the microphone’s being in the desk. (C saw that the microphone-planter never went near the desk, and D has access to C’s evidence by being in conversation with her.) So C ought to reject updating with the content of B’s utterance, and ought to warn D off of updating with it as well. She can do this by saying, “that’s false” in response to D’s request for a verdict on the truth-value of B’s assertion.

Faultless disagreement:

Very briefly, here is how the *de se* relativist promises to deliver faultless disagreement:

We get *disagreement* because the uptake conditions of the two assertions (of e.g. “vegemite is tasty” and “vegemite is not tasty”) are incompatible - no assessor’s acceptance state, and no conversational context, can be consistently updated with both propositions.

We get faultlessness (or at least, we get something that should satisfy our intuition of faultlessness) because (a) the propositions asserted are both true of the people asserting them, and so each party to the disagreement is correct to accept their own assertion, and (b) each party is correct to reject the other’s assertion, because (for example) G’s assertion is false of J, and J’s is false of G.

This is very quick – things get more complicated quickly. We take up some complications with the motivating cases in section 5.ⁱⁱⁱ

3. *De se* philosophy of mind

We have seen the barebones of *de se* relativism and how the view makes sense of eavesdropper and disagreement cases. Let's now look at the complementary motivations for *de se* content in the philosophy of mind. The introduction of *de se* content is, in the first instance, motivated by the existence of psychological phenomena that resist characterization in terms of propositional attitudes with possible-worlds content, but that are happily characterized in terms of attitudes with *de se* content. For our purposes, we will quickly rehearse some of the most compelling examples and make a few points that will be relevant for understanding how the *de se* relativist view is meant to work.

Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, in the early months of 1974, displayed an important doxastic similarity, which gave rise to similarities in their behavioral dispositions. Each of them believed of himself that he was the greatest. And that doxastic similarity disposed them to act in similar ways – to expect victory in boxing matches, regardless of the opponent; to dispute others' claims to be the greatest; to seek out opportunities to fight for the heavyweight championship of the world, etc. But clearly this doxastic similarity wasn't a matter of both of them believing some common possible-worlds proposition. Ali didn't believe *that Foreman is the greatest*, Foreman didn't believe *that Ali is the greatest*, and while they did both believe *that somebody is the greatest*, we believe that too, and we emphatically do not share the behavioral dispositions that are symptomatic of Ali and Foreman's doxastic similarity. A centered-worlds proposition, however, will do nicely as a common object of belief. In particular, the one that's true relative to $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff *i* is the greatest (boxer) at *t* in *w*.^{iv}

Another famous example is Perry's (1977) bear attack case, presented here in lightly modified form: John and David are walking in the woods when John is attacked by a bear. Everyone is on the same page about what the world is like – John and David are just alike with respect to their relevant possible-worlds-y beliefs. But they act very differently – John curls up into a ball, David runs for help. If we want to explain their difference in behavior in terms of a doxastic difference – in terms of each of them doxastically appreciating and appropriately responding to the differences in their situations – it won't be in terms of a difference in possible-worlds propositions believed. But we could happily explain their difference in behavior in terms of a difference in centered-worlds propositions believed. While both John and David stand in the belief relation to the proposition that includes $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff John is being attacked by a bear while David looks on in *w* (at *t*), only John believes the proposition that includes $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff *i* is being attacked by a bear at *t* in *w*, and only David believes the proposition that includes $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff *i* is an unattacked witness to a bear attack at *t* in *w*.

This is all very quick, and does not pretend to be a full-dress argument for the Lewisian framework for theorizing about self-locating belief. But it is, we hope, enough to see the motivation for the introduction of centered-worlds propositions as objects of belief, and to see the theoretical itch the introduction of *de se* content in the philosophy of mind is meant to scratch.^v

Two remarks before we move on. First, we can think of centered-worlds propositions as being, or representing, properties. For instance, the centered-worlds proposition that is true at a $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff i is disposed (at t , in w) to enjoy the taste of Vegemite is true of you now just in case you now instantiate the property *being disposed to enjoy the taste of Vegemite*. We will treat centered-worlds talk and property talk interchangeably. Second, everything that is captured by possible worlds propositions can also be captured by centered-worlds propositions because, as Lewis (1979) points out, there is a 1-1 correspondence between the possible-worlds propositions and a proper subset of the centered-worlds propositions. The possible-worlds proposition that is true at w iff snow is white at w corresponds to the centered-worlds proposition that is true at $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff snow is white at $\langle w, t, i \rangle$. This centered-worlds proposition does not vary with time and individual – if it's true at any location within a world, it is true at every location in that world. We call centered-worlds propositions that do not vary across locations within worlds *boring* and those centered-worlds propositions that do vary across locations within the same world *interesting*. (This terminology is from Egan 2006.)

4. *De se* semantics and *de se* communication

A central motivating thought behind *de se* relativism is that there are some sentences, the central conventional communicative role of which is to produce *de se* beliefs (more carefully, *de se* uptake effects) in addressees and/or conversational contexts. (That's the motivating thought behind the sort of *de se* relativism Egan (2007, 2010, 2012, 2014) and Kindermann (2016, forthcoming) advocate. But see also section 6.) That a sentence is governed by this sort of communicative practice would explain the patterns of acceptance and rejection, truth-value attribution, and judgements about disagreement and faultlessness that we (arguably) see around epistemic modal sentences and taste sentences. The semantic theory delivers centered-worlds propositions as semantically determined contents in context is in service of that thought.

It's important to note that we don't need a *de se* semantics in order to predict *every de se* communicative effect in conversation. And under the assumption that the central theoretical role of semantic content is to model acceptance conditions, there will be many *de se* communicative effects that we will emphatically not want to explain in terms of a *de se* semantics (but will instead explain by having *de se* contents figure in pragmatics). For example:

English speakers can use sentences containing indexicals to communicate to their interlocutors that they have a particular *de se* belief. Muhammad Ali does this when he says, at the pre-fight press conference, "I am the greatest". Explaining this doesn't require the introduction of any semantic machinery beyond that of a standard sort of Kaplanian contextualism about "I". Given

a standard view of the context-dependence of “I” (that it refers, in a context *c*, to the speaker of *c*), and a *de se*-ist philosophy of mind, we can predict that sincere English speakers will only assert “I am the greatest” if they self-attribute *being the greatest*. We can also predict that competent users of English will, in virtue of their knowledge of how the context-dependence of “I” works, realize that sincere speakers will only say “I am the greatest” if they self-attribute *being the greatest*. And that speakers will, on the basis of their linguistic competence and their presupposition that their interlocutors are similarly competent, realize that their interlocutors know this, and that their interlocutors know that they know it. And so speakers will be in a position to use their productions of “I am the greatest” to communicate to their interlocutors, by way of the usual sort of Gricean mechanism, that they self-attribute *being the greatest*.

None of this requires any fancy semantics – it’s straightforwardly predicted by an off-the-shelf Kaplanian account of “I” (Kaplan 1989), on which Ali’s assertion of “I am the greatest” has as its content the possible-worlds proposition (equivalently, a boring centered-worlds proposition) that Ali is the greatest. So we don’t need any semantic innovations in order to explain and predict this kind of *de se* communicative phenomenon. And if we’re working in a framework in which semantic content in context serves to characterize uptake conditions, the introduction of at least one kind of semantic innovation – going for a semantics for indexicals such that sentences like “I am the greatest” wind up getting assigned interestingly *de se* content in context – will be disastrous. A theory according to which the uptake condition for “I am the greatest” is self-attributing *being the greatest* (i.e., accepting the CWP true at $\langle w, t, i \rangle$ iff *i* is the greatest at *t* in *w*) is not a good theory of indexicals, as it would have competent and trusting hearers self-attribute the property *being the greatest*. So the presence of this kind of *de se* communicative effect doesn’t exert theoretical pressure to go for a *de se* semantics.^{vi}

The same is true for a common sort of second-personal *de se* communicative effect, by which speakers can, systematically, use sentences involving second-personal pronouns like “you” to produce *de se* beliefs in their addressees. For example, Bob can systematically use the sentence, “you are a fool” to produce self-attributions of being a fool in credulous addressees. So personal pronouns and standard context-sensitive expressions such as “here”, “now”, “this”, and “that” (and many non-standard context-sensitive expressions) do not require the implementation of *de se* effects within one’s semantic theory. They can be handled by standard pragmatics combined with a *de se* philosophy of mind.^{vii}

The sorts of phenomena we saw in section 1, however, are not similarly predictable on the basis of off-the-shelf Kaplanian semantics, off-the-shelf pragmatic principles, and *de se* philosophy of mind. Those phenomena were: (1) variation across assessors in the appropriateness of acceptance and rejection of a single utterance; (2) variation across assessors of the truth-values it’s appropriate for them to attribute to a single utterance; (3) judgements about disagreement and correctness, in which we’re inclined to say that (for example) *g* and *h* disagree about whether vegemite toast is delicious, but they’re both correct.

These sort of *de se* communicative phenomena are not happily explained by off-the-shelf pragmatics and an off-the shelf contextualist semantics that delivers no *de se* contents, together

with a *de se* philosophy of mind. But a *de se* semantics, paired with an understanding of semantic content as characterizing uptake conditions, does promise to explain them.

5. Complicating the motivation

Things are more complicated with respect to the motivation for relativism than we let on in section 1. For complications with faultless disagreement cases, see the entry “Faultless Disagreement” by Dan Zeman in this handbook. As regards eavesdropper cases, we suggested in section 1 (though we were careful not to quite assert) that what we in fact observe is eavesdroppers systematically and uniformly assessing extra-conversational epistemic modal claims in the light of their own evidence, rather than the evidence that’s plausibly relevant to the speaker, and systematically and uniformly assessing extra-conversational taste claims in the light of their own tastes, rather than those of (or those plausibly relevant to) the speaker; and that what we in fact observe from theorists contemplating these sorts of cases is clear, distinct and universal intuitions that those are the correct assessments for eavesdroppers to make. But that is not what we actually see.

What we actually see is a complicated pattern of ambivalence and variability in the sorts of judgments that it seems appropriate, to various theorists, for eavesdroppers to make. Some kinds of cases provoke, more strongly and/or more frequently, the sorts of judgments characteristic of the “flat-footed reaction” of section 1. Other kinds of cases provoke, more strongly and/or more frequently, the intuition that eavesdroppers’ assessments ought to be based on the evidence or the standards of the speaker. (See for instance Knobe and Yalcin 2014, Fintel and Gillies 2008, 2011, Dowell 2011.)

Some *de se* relativists have argued for their view on the basis of its ability to accommodate this sort of variability, and in particular to explain the specific patterns of variation in judgments that we observe. (See Beddor and Egan 2019; cf. also Lasersohn 2005 and 2017 on autocentric vs exocentric uses of predicates of personal taste.)

6. Versions of *de se* relativism and other contemporary relativisms

De se relativism (DSR) is characterized by the commitment to SEMANTIC CONTENT and FOUNDATIONS (section 2). Moreover, perhaps *the* distinguishing feature of *de se* relativism is its *de se* philosophy of mind, on which having an attitude like the belief that vegemite is tasty amounts to self-attributing the property *being disposed to enjoy the taste of Vegemite*. (This is captured more precisely with the formal tools of centered-worlds propositions and the idea of attitudes as self-location, but this is an optional, if useful, feature of the view.) This allows for some variation among *de se* relativists. For instance, while Egan (2010, 2012, 2014) places central importance on the foundational role of conventional *uptake* conditions (rather than production conditions) for assertoric content, Kindermann (2012, forthcoming) stresses the assumption that

cooperative conversation is aimed at the coordination of individual perspectives in the conversation's common ground – placing equal importance on production and acceptance conditions for constraining assertoric content. As a result, Kindermann argues that a full characterization of the communication of both *de se* attitudes expressed with personal pronouns (“I”, “you”) and taste attitudes requires the introduction of multi-centered possible worlds content.

Several recent relativist views (Brogaard 2007, 2012, Kölbel 2013, Lasersohn 2005 & 2016, Recanati 2007, Stephenson 2007 & 2008) are more or less close to DSR and may be seen as versions of *de se* relativism. Minimally, they all share with DSR a centered-worlds semantics (or something plausibly intertranslatable with a centered-worlds semantics) on which semantically determined assertoric contents are interesting centered-worlds propositions (cf. the first commitment of DSR, SEMANTIC CONTENT). This does not mean, however, that these views all share the second commitment of DSR, FOUNDATIONS, or a *de se* account of mental attitudes.

Another contemporary version of relativism, MacFarlane's assessment-sensitive relativism (MacFarlane 2014, see chapter XXX by Filippo Ferrari), differs from *de se* relativism in a number of crucial ways. For one thing, assessment-sensitive relativism (ASR) does not feature centered-worlds propositions but relativizes propositional truth to (world, time and) information states, standards of taste, and/or whatever a particular application of the view requires. This feature is central to ASR's different predictions about the felicity of assertions, e.g. in cases involving predicates of personal taste embedded under past and future tense and modal expressions (see MacFarlane 2014, chapter 7, and Kindermann 2012, chapter 6). MacFarlane's ASR also differs from DSR in its approach to the semantic foundations of the view. MacFarlane takes speaker-centered conditions (on assertion and retraction) to be foundational for semantic content. In particular, he sees the speech act of retraction by the speaker to be the motivating foundational piece for assessment-sensitive relativism, whereas DSR places central importance on uptake conditions.

Bibliography

- Brogaard, Berit (2007). “Moral Contextualism and Moral Relativism.” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 58(232), 385–409
- Brogaard, Berit (2012). “Colour Eliminativism or Colour Relativism?” *Philosophical Papers* 41(2), 305–21
- Cappelen, Herman and Dever, Josh (2013). *The Inessential Indexical*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Castañeda, Hector-Neri (1966). “‘He’: A Study in the Logic of Self-consciousness.” *Ratio* 8, 130–57
- Chisholm, Roderick (1981). *The First Person*. Brighton: The Harvester Press.
- Dowell, Janice J.L. (2011). “A Flexible Contextualist Account of Epistemic Modals,” *Philosophers' Imprint* 11:1-25.

- Egan, Andy (2007). "Epistemic Modals, Relativism and Assertion." *Philosophical Studies* 133, 1–22
- Egan, Andy (2010). "Disputing About Taste." In: *Disagreement*. Richard Feldman and Ted A. Warfield (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 247–86.
- Egan, Andy (2012). "Relativist Dispositional Theories of Value." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 50(4), 557–82
- Egan, Andy (2014). "There's Something Funny about Comedy: A Case Study in Faultless Disagreement." *Erkenntnis* 79(1), 73–100.
- Egan, Andy (forthcoming). "De Se Pragmatics." *Philosophical Perspectives*.
- Fintel, Kai von, and Gillies, Anthony S. (2008). "CIA Leaks." *The Philosophical Review* 117, 77–98.
- Fintel, Kai von, and Gillies, Anthony (2011). "'Might' Made Right." In: Egan, A. and Weatherson, B. *Epistemic Modality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 108–30.
- García-Carpintero, Manuel, and Torre, Stephan (2016). *About Oneself. De Se Thought and Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaplan, David (1989). "Demonstratives. An Essay on the Semantics, Logic, Metaphysics, and Epistemology of Demonstratives and Other Indexicals." In: Almog, J., Perry, J., and Wettstein, H. *Themes from Kaplan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 481–563.
- Kindermann, Dirk (2012). *Perspective in Context. Relative Truth, Knowledge, and the First Person*. PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews.
- Kindermann, Dirk (2016). "Varieties of Centering and De Se Communication." In: Garcia-Carpintero, M. and Torre, S. *About Oneself. De Se Thought and Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 307–40.
- Kindermann, Dirk (forthcoming). "Coordinating Perspectives: De Se Attitudes and Taste Attitudes in Communication." *Inquiry*.
- Kölbel, Max (2013). "The Conversational Role of Centered Contents." *Inquiry* 56(2-3), 97–121
- Lasersohn, Peter (2005). "Context Dependence, Disagreement, and Predicates of Personal Taste." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 28, 643–86.
- Lasersohn, Peter (2016). *Subjectivity and Perspective in Truth-Theoretic Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, David (1979). "Attitudes De Dicto and De Se." *The Philosophical Review* 88(4), 513–43.
- MacFarlane, John (2014). *Assessment-Sensitivity. Relative Truth and Its Applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Magidor, Ofra (2015). "The Myth of the De Se." *Philosophical Perspectives* 29(1), 249–83.
- Millikan, Ruth Garrett (1990). "The Myth of the Essential Indexical." *Noûs* 24(5). 723–34.
- Moss, Sarah (2012). "Updating as Communication." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85(2), 225–48.
- Ninan, Dilip (2010). "Semantics and the Objects of Assertion." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 33(5), 355–80.
- Ninan, Dilip (2016). "What is the Problem of De Se Attitudes?" In: Garcia-Carpintero, M. and Torre, S. *About Oneself. De Se Thought and Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 86–120
- Perry, John (1977). "Frege on Demonstratives." *The Philosophical Review* 86(4), 474–97.
- Perry, John (1979). "The Problem of the Essential Indexical." *Noûs* 31(1), 3–21.

- Rabern, Brian (2012). "Against the Identification of Assertoric Content with Compositional Value." *Synthese* 189(1), 75–96.
- Stalnaker, Robert (1978). "Assertion." *Syntax and Semantics 9: Pragmatics* (ed. P. Cole). New York: Academic Press, 315–32
- Stalnaker, Robert (2002). "Common Ground." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 25(5), 701–21.
- Stephenson, Tamina (2007a). "Judge Dependence, Epistemic Modals, and Predicates of Personal Taste." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30(4), 487–525.
- Stephenson, Tamina (2007b). *Toward a Theory of Subjective Meaning*. PhD Thesis, MIT
- Torre, Stephan (2010). "Centered Assertion." *Philosophical Studies* 150(1), 97–114.
- Torre, Stephan (2018). "In Defense of *De Se* Content." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 97(1), 172–89.
- Weber, Clas (2013). "Centered Communication." *Philosophical Studies* 166(1), 205–23.

ⁱ Just what the relation is between compositional semantic values and semantically determined content is controversial. Ninan (2010) and Rabern (2012) argue convincingly that the relation mustn't uncritically be assumed to be identity. Pretty much all parties to the controversy agree that, somehow, compositional semantics *determines* some kind of semantic content, which plays some important role in a theory of communication. In the main text, we remain neutral about exactly what the underlying compositional semantic theory, and mechanism for going from compositional semantics to semantic content, looks like. See Kindermann (forthcoming) for an implementation of *de se* relativism for predicates of taste in a modified Kaplanian two-dimensional framework (Kaplan 1989).

ⁱⁱ The notion of presupposition is the one championed by Robert Stalnaker (1978). See Egan (2007, 2010) and Kindermann (2012, 2019) for details of how talk about taste and epistemic modality works on Stalnaker's model of communication.

ⁱⁱⁱ For many criticisms of the relativist's reliance on faultless disagreement as well as the various characterizations of the phenomenon, see chapter XXX, "Faultless Disagreement", by Dan Zeman.

^{iv} This case is inspired by Perry's (1977) Hume/Heimson example, but we prefer it to the Hume/Heimson case because the beliefs involved are prosaic and not pathological.

^v In favour of special contents for first-person, or *de se*, thought, see Castañeda 1966, Chisholm 1981, Lewis 1979, and more recently Ninan (2016) and Torre (2018) (and Perry 1977 & 1979 for special modes of presentation). For arguments against the need for special *de se* contents, see e.g. Millikan 1990, Magidor 2015 and Cappelen & Dever 2013.

^{vi} For recent literature on the communication of *de se* attitudes, see the papers in García-Carpintero & Torre (2016) as well as Moss (2012), Ninan (2010), Torre (2010), and Weber (2013).

^{vii} Egan (forthcoming) and Kindermann (2012, 2016, forthcoming) spell out the details of *de se* effects in communication and their place within semantics and pragmatics. See also chapter XXX "Perspectival Content" by Max Kölbel.