RELATIVISM
AND MONADIC TRUTH

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1

Overview: Simplicity, Possible Worlds Semantics, and Relativism

SIMPLICITY INTRODUCED

This short monograph is about the contents of thought and talk. In particular, it defends a mainstream view of those contents against some influential, seductive, but ultimately unpersuasive objections. The mainstream view that we undertake to defend can be usefully summarized by the following five theses.

- *T1*: There are propositions and they instantiate the fundamental monadic properties of truth *simpliciter* and falsity *simpliciter*.
- *T2*: The semantic values of declarative sentences relative to contexts of utterance are propositions.[1]
- *T3*: Propositions are, unsurprisingly, the objects of propositional attitudes, such as belief, hope, wish, doubt, etc.
- *T4*: Propositions are the objects of illocutionary acts; they are, e.g., what we assert and deny.
- *T5*: Propositions are the objects of agreement and disagreement.[2]

T1–T5 fit together nicely: the contents of sentences are propositions (T1 & T2); we assert these contents (T4); in so far as we are sincere, what we assert is what we believe (T3); and in so doing we can agree or disagree with each other (T5). Henceforth we shall call T1–T5 'The Simple View', or 'Simplicity' for short.

Simplicity is a framework for developing theories of propositions, of illocutionary acts, and of semantic structure. Obviously, it is neutral

[1] We shall remain neutral on whether it is right to think of the semantic values of orders and questions as propositions.

[2] We take this to be a widespread and mainstream view. For a recent expression of sympathy, see Neale (2007: 368–9, n. 68).

on a number of semantic decision points.[3] Propositions might be structured objects of some Russellian variety or they might be a different kind of entity altogether.[4] They may or may not exhibit hyper-intensionality—whereby certain pairs of distinct propositions are true at the same possible worlds. We have views on such issues, but they will not detain us in these pages. Our interest is rather in the abstract commitment of Simplicity to truth-evaluable contents that serve a dual role as the objects of attitudes and the contents of sentences.

T1 signals our main focus, and requires elaboration.

T1 and Fundamentality

According to Simplicity, truth and falsity are *fundamental* monadic properties of propositions. If there are talking donkeys, then the proposition we could now express by the sentence 'There are talking donkeys' has the fundamental monadic property of being true, and, if there are no talking donkeys, then that proposition has the fundamental monadic property of being false. This contrasts with those who think that the fundamental properties in the vicinity of truth are relational—for example, 'being true *at* a world' or 'being true *at* a time'. Of course, and as we emphasize in Chapter 3, T1 is compatible with there being relational properties of being *true* or *false at a world*; but what is important is that such relational properties are to be explained in terms of the more fundamental properties of truth and falsity *simpliciter*.

Why the emphasis on fundamentality? Philosophy tries to describe reality at its joints, and philosophical semantics attempts to describe the contents of thought and talk at its joints. The oft-paraded examples of *grue* and *bleen* teach us that there are all sorts of cooked-up ways of describing reality that, while not inaccurate, employ gerrymandered classifications that leave the veins of deep similarity and difference unexposed. Simplicity does not just try to find some package of objects and monadic properties that can ground a style of semantics that respects

[3] Many of the ideas defended here could no doubt be endorsed in some suitably revised form by someone who did not wish to be ontologically committed to propositions. We shall not in these pages be enquiring as to how the relevant reformulations are to be achieved: as always, ontological parsimony has to pay the price of verbosity, unnaturalness, or awkwardness in formulation.

[4] The atomic variety of so-called Russellian propositions has objects and properties as constituents: the Russellian proposition *that three is odd* has the number three and oddness as proper parts.

T1–T5. What Simplicity bets on is that, when one carves linguistic and psychological reality at its joints, monadic truth and falsity will take centre stage, and that invoking relations such as *true at* and *false at* is a step towards the gerrymandered and not the fundamental.

Our insistence on the fundamentality of monadic truth and falsity does not mean that we are hostile to relational truth predicates for *sentences*. Just as someone who thought that *healthiness* is an important biological property of certain organisms need have no deep hostility to derived uses of 'healthy' (for example, for diets, food, and urine), someone who thinks monadic truth is an important property of certain propositions can allow for various derivative notions. Thus, for example, we might introduce a dyadic predicate—true at—that holds between a sentence and a context of utterance. What is important, from the perspective of Simplicity, is that this and other derivative uses are explained in terms of the more fundamental monadic properties of propositional truth and falsehood—for example, we may naturally explain the truth of a sentence at a context in terms of the truth of a proposition expressed by the sentence in that context.

We note in passing that much of what we have to say (especially in Chapters 2 and 4) can be adapted to the defence of a slightly more modest package, one that embraces propositions with fundamental truth or falsity as the exclusive objects of belief, assertion, and agreement, but that does not embrace T2. We invite readers who are sceptical about the notion of semantic values at contexts, or who are wedded to deviant conceptions of such values, to consider the merits of the package T1 plus T3–T5 in the light of the discussion that follows.[5]

T1, Contingency, and Temporality

It is perfectly compatible with T1 that some propositions that are true *simpliciter* might have been false—call this 'Contingency'.[6] In general, the fact that something has a fundamental monadic property *F* hardly entails that it could not have failed to have it; just apply this lesson to

[5] One final point of clarification: to get our intentions right, think here of 'instantiates', as it figures in T1, as a simple binary relation between an object and a property. Suppose that one held that instantiation is a three-place relation between an object, a property, and a time, and one said that the property of being true was instantiated by a certain proposition at noon but not at 1 p.m. That would not, on the intended construal, square with T1.

[6] For relevant discussion, see Williamson (2002: 238–40).

the special case where *F* is *truth*. What the proponent of Simplicity who advocates Contingency needs to resist is that the truth of a proposition is to be explained in terms of a relation of *true at* holding between that proposition and a certain object—the actual world—and that the possible falsity of a proposition is to be explained in terms of a relation of *false at* holding between that proposition and a possible world.

Similarly, on the face of it, it is perfectly compatible with T1 that some propositions that are true *simpliciter will be false* or *were false*—call this 'Temporality'.[7] What the proponent of Simplicity who advocates Temporality needs to resist is the thesis that the truth of a proposition expressed by 'There are lots of US troops in Iraq' is to be explained by the relation *true at* holding between the proposition *that there are lots of US troops in Iraq* and a time, and that the falsity of the proposition expressed by an utterance of 'There will in fifty years' time be lots of US troops in Iraq' is explained by the relation *false at* holding between that proposition and a time fifty years from now. As we shall see, Simplicity makes trouble for Contingency and Temporality only given certain additional metaphysical commitments. (We return to this issue in Chapter 3.)

Relativism and Simplicity

Since antiquity, relativism has provided a persistent source of opposition to Simplicity. Protagoras tells us, in effect, that the claim that the air is cold cannot be assessed as true *simpliciter*, since it may be cold for one person and not for another.[8] Protagorean arguments of this sort are, of course, compatible with the thesis that some of the contents of thought and talk can be assessed for truth and falsity *simpliciter*. But, when taken at face value, they put pressure on the view that all such contents can be

[7] Suppose there has been a sea battle earlier today and someone yesterday said 'A sea battle will happen tomorrow'. The proponent of Temporality who finds indeterminacy intuitions somewhat compelling (we do not) may be tempted to describe the situation as follows: 'The proposition that the person expressed *used to be* neither true nor false, even though it turned out to *be* true.' This kind of use of Temporality generates a distinctive set of verdicts about future contingent claims and retrospective assessments of them (one that can be rendered compatible with Simplicity). We shall not attempt to evaluate its merits here.

[8] Protagorean ideas pertinent to relativism are famously presented in Plato's *Theaetetus*. See especially 154b–162e (Plato 1997 edn.: 171–81). No original texts by Protagoras have survived.

evaluated in that way, and suggest that new, relational, modes of alethic evaluation need to be developed for large swathes of discourse.

Mainstream philosophy has a battery of standard responses to Protagorean radicalism. Faced with certain examples, the main line of response will be that difficulty in *knowing* which propositions are true *simpliciter* provides no good reason for revising the ideology of monadic truth and falsity. Thus, for example, it is often said that a proliferation of views as to which distribution of goods is most just signals only an epistemic problem and not the judge-relativity of claims of justice. Faced with other examples, the central line of response will be carefully to distinguish relativism from context dependence. So, for example, one might dismiss relativism about 'It is cold' by claiming that, when Aristotle claims 'It is not cold', having come into the antechamber of the baths from the outside, he expresses the proposition *that it is not cold for Aristotle*, whereas, when Thales says 'It is cold', having come into that antechamber from the hot baths, he expresses the proposition *that it is cold for Thales*. The superficial monadicity of coldness is given up, and by doing so the monadicity of truth is restored. After all—and this is a very standard point—the claim that it is cold for Thales does not seem to be the sort of thing that is true relative to one judge but not to another.

We assume a certain amount of familiarity with these moves on the part of the reader, and we will not be rehearsing them in any great detail. Nor will we be embellishing our discussion with emotionally laden warnings about the perils that relativism poses for a healthy culture or intellect—we leave such posturing to others. It is not even clear that the relativisms that we are about to describe are altogether sinister. We think they are wrong and that the arguments and considerations that have been offered in their favour are confused. Relativism is, however, sufficiently 'catchy' for one to expect such views to proliferate if their intellectual flaws are not properly exposed. So, despite seeing no need for a moral crusade against relativists (we do not in any case feel particularly qualified for moral crusades), we feel the current monograph is one well worth writing.

Relativism has dominated many intellectual circles, past and present, but the twentieth century saw it banished to the fringes of mainstream Analytic philosophy.[9] Of late, however, it is making something of

[9] We are a little uncomfortable with the term 'analytic', since much of what parades as analytic philosophy is not particularly analytical, while we are in no position to

a comeback within that loosely configured tradition, a comeback that attempts to capitalize on some important ideas in foundational semantics that cannot be squared with Simplicity. The anti-Simplicity arguments that inspire such relativists can be found in an impressive array of leading figures in the field. David Kaplan (1989) appeals to them in 'Demonstratives'. Michael Dummett's distinction between Ingredient Sense and Assertoric Content (in Dummett 1991) is an attempt to undermine Simplicity. And a thoroughgoing attack on Simplicity can be found in Lewis's classic 1980 paper, 'Index, Context and Content', where he concludes: 'It would be a convenience, nothing more, if we could take the propositional content of a sentence in context as its semantic value. But we cannot'(Lewis 1998: 39). Kaplan's and Lewis's arguments are particularly important. Their framework is sufficiently radical as to set the stage for recent brands of relativism in Analytic philosophy.[10]

Our aim in this book is not merely to combat Analytic relativism but also to combat those foundational ideas in semantics that led to its revival. Doing so will require a proper understanding of the significance of possible worlds semantics, an examination of the relation between truth and the flow of time, an account of putatively relevant data from attitude and speech-act reporting, and a careful treatment of various operators. In warding off these challenges to Simplicity, we do not, of course, thereby pretend to have shown that Simplicity is correct. The overarching strategy of this book is to provide responses to what we see as the main objections to Simplicity. While that might seem a modest goal, it is, we think, a significant step towards a full-scale defence of the view. There is a naturalness about Simplicity that puts a heavy burden on anyone who wants to reject it. In consequence, Simplicity will speak for itself well enough once the salient obfuscatory noise has been silenced.[11]

discount all philosophy from other traditions as non-analytical. 'Anglo-American' would be worse, as some of our targets are from other countries. So we have decided to stick with 'analytic'.

[10] Note that the quotation also raises the question as to whether the choice between a relativist and non-relativist approach to semantics is deep or superficial, a question that readers should bear in mind as they attempt to grapple with the issues.

[11] Simplicity is such a natural view that it is endorsed by almost anyone who does not have some philosophical axe to grind; hence it makes little sense to give an overview of its proponents. One particularly eloquent proponent of Simplicity is Evans (1985), who uses it against some of the same kinds of opponents as we have in this monograph.

The remainder of this chapter is a brief introduction to various lines of thought that, for reasons we ultimately think are poor, have fed recent opposition to Simplicity and that have led to the emergence of semantically motivated relativism. We also present what we take to be the core ideas of Analytic relativism.

FROM POSSIBLE WORLDS SEMANTICS TO ANALYTIC RELATIVISM

Some well-known and indispensable features of possible worlds semantics can, when improperly interpreted, appear to feed relativistic opposition to Simplicity. To see what we have in mind, recall first the notion of content we are familiar with from Carnap, Montague, Lewis, Kaplan, and others. Kaplan (1989: 501–2) suggests that we 'represent a content by a function from a circumstance of evaluation to an appropriate extension. Carnap called such functions *intensions*.' In this tradition, the semantic values of expressions are construed in a function-theoretic way: the intension of a singular term as a function from worlds to individuals; the intension of an *n*-place predicate as a function from worlds to *n*-tuples; and the intension of a sentence (relative to a context) as a function from worlds to truth values.

There is no question that, pursued along these lines, possible worlds semantics gives philosophers immensely powerful tools for doing logic, semantics, and related areas in philosophy. Further, for one habituated into this style of semantics, it becomes very natural to think of the fundamental mode of evaluation for propositions as *truth relative to worlds*. After all, the functional conception does not appear straightforwardly to assign a truth value to a proposition, but rather assigns a truth value relative to this or that world taken as argument. It then becomes somewhat natural to think of the *actual* truth of a proposition as a matter of the proposition getting the value 'true' relative to a distinguished world—the actual world. In so far as one construes all this as a perspicuous description of semantic reality, Simplicity has already been relinquished—simple truth and falsity have given way to alethic relations to worlds.

Note that this kind of departure from Simplicity need not take the particular form of a function/argument theoretic semantics: what is most centrally relevant for us is the move to a framework that asks after the truth value of a proposition at a world and explains

ordinary truth in terms of truth value at a distinguished world. The function/argument conception is thus but one path to replacing monadic truth and falsity with a conception that makes truth or falsity relative to a setting—a 'circumstance of evaluation'—along a world parameter.

Additional Parameters: The Operator Argument

Lewis, Kaplan, and others argue that we must relativize truth and falsity of semantic contents not just to worlds but also to times, standards of precision, and locations. Intensions, according to Kaplan (1989), are functions from *circumstance* to extensions, and by '["circumstance"] I mean both actual and counterfactual situations with respect to which it is appropriate to ask for the extensions of a given well-formed expression' (p. 502). Circumstances, for Kaplan, include not only worlds: 'A circumstance will usually include a possible state or history of the world, a time, and perhaps other features as well' (p. 502).[12]

How, according to Kaplan, do we determine what goes into a circumstance of evaluation? Kaplan, in response to this question, says: 'The amount of information we require from a circumstance is linked to the degree of specificity of contents, and thus to the kinds of operators in the language' (p. 502). According to Kaplan, natural languages contain at least modal, temporal, and, maybe, locational operators. For reasons we shall discuss at length, Kaplan infers that contents, what Kaplan calls 'what is said', are non-specific with respect to worlds, times, and locations. These features, according to Kaplan, are provided by the circumstance of evaluation. Thus, if you say 'It is raining', what you say is true only relative to a triple of settings along three parameters—world, time, and location. Following orthodox possible worlds semantics, Kaplan wishes to explain the semantic contribution of the operator 'possibly' in terms of a relation to a world parameter—a sentence of the form 'Possibly P' is true at a world w iff 'P' is true at some world accessible from w. Kaplan expects 'Soon P' and 'Nearby P' to get a semantical treatment that, *mutatis mutandis*, fits the same mould: 'Soon P' is true at a time t iff 'P' is true at a time soon after t and 'Nearby P' is true at a place p iff 'P' is true at a place nearby to p. This style of operator-theoretic

[12] Kaplan (1989: 503) goes on to point out that such semantic contents are not propositions, in any traditional sense. He says that when we subtract time and location from content, we have to relinquish 'the traditional notion of a proposition'.

reasoning against Simplicity, adopted also by David Lewis, forms the main topic of Chapter 3.

It bears emphasis here that, even when one fixes on an occasion of use the semantic content of a sentence, this content is, on the Kaplanian view, non-specific (or, as we will sometimes say in what follows, 'thin'). The point of the view is not that 'It is raining', in abstraction from context of use, has a thin content; even when we allow the content of a sentence to be relativized to a context of use, we should *still* think of the content of 'It is raining' as thin. By contrast, for Kaplan, 'I am hungry' will load up the speaker as part of the content relative to a context of use.

From Kaplan to Relativism

We have thus far described some ostensibly sober semantical manoeuvres that deliver relativity of truth for a class of contents—specifically, contents that are non-specific with regard to worlds, times, and locations. Contemporary Analytic relativists have been building upon this world-relativity of truth in ways that some have found quite natural, but which take us in more radical directions. In what follows we describe the move from Kaplan-style semantics to a more full-blown relativism as consisting of three steps: (i) Proliferation; (ii) Disquotation; (iii) Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports.[13] As well as identifying these steps, we shall underscore the importance of each to relativist thinking.

The version of relativism we present below is an attempt to distil the key philosophical ideas from a rather messy domain. We are not trying to offer some general definition of 'relativism' about which one can play counterexample games.[14] Nor are we trying to recapitulate all the structural features of our targets' favoured toy semantical frameworks. In other words, our presentation of relativism is in part normative: it has required some judgement as to what is important and what is instead idle artefact in currently popular presentations of the view. However, those readers who do not see the terminology in which they cast their favoured version of relativism, and hence worry that our target is a straw man, can rest assured: the ideas that we are about to present

[13] Possible motivations for these steps will emerge in the course of our discussion.

[14] We note in passing that Kölbel and MacFarlane use 'relativism' in distinctly different ways. The former uses the term for views that postulate additional parameters to a possible worlds parameter. The latter reserves the term for views that postulate 'assessor sensitivity' (more on this later).

are driving forces behind Analytic relativism; and the argumentative strategies that we present and criticize in later chapters are in many cases quite pervasive among relativists. Whatever the force of our critique, we cannot fairly be accused of having changed the subject.

THE THREE CORE IDEAS OF RELATIVISM

As we see it, the crispest and most elegant version of relativism comprises three central theses:

(i) Proliferation;
(ii) Disquotation;
(iii) Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports.

We discuss these in turn.

Proliferation

Contemporary Analytic relativists reason as follows: 'Lewis and Kaplan have shown that we need to relativize truth to triples of <world, time, location>.[15] Hence, in a way, anyone who follows Lewis and Kaplan is already a relativist. There are only truth and falsity relative to settings along these three parameters, and so there is no such thing as truth *simpliciter*. But, having already started down this road, why not exploit these strategies further? In particular, by adding new and exotic parameters into the circumstances of evaluation, we can allow the contents of thought and talk to be non-specific (in Kaplan's sense) along dimensions other than world, time, and location.

This proliferation of parameter-relativity enables us to move in yet more Protagorean directions. Thus, for example, we might associate a perceiver parameter with 'It is cold' and insist that the semantic value of 'It is cold', on an occasion of use, is true only relative to a quadruple that includes world, time, location, and perceiver.

As an example of proliferation in action, consider the following remarks by John MacFarlane (2007*a*: 21–2):

[15] The kinds of views we have in mind are found paradigmatically in the work of John MacFarlane (e.g. MacFarlane 2005, 2007*a*, *b*), and also in Kölbel (2002), Richard (2004), Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson (2005), Lasersohn (2005), Egan (2007), and Stephenson (2007).

Taking this line of thought a little farther, the relativist might envision contents that are 'sense-of-humor neutral' or 'standard-of-taste neutral' or 'epistemic-state neutral,' and circumstances of evaluation that include parameters for a sense of humor, a standard of taste, or an epistemic state. This move would open up room for the truth-value of a proposition to vary with these 'subjective' factors in much the same way that it varies with the world of evaluation. The very same proposition—say, that apples are delicious—could be true with respect to one standard of taste, false with respect to another.

As we shall see, and as MacFarlane indicates, relativists anticipate imposing their perspective on a variety of subject matters—deliciousness, funniness, epistemic modality, and so on. In each case an important step is to insist on a parameter additional to the possible world parameter than can then be exploited.

Disquotation

We ordinarily talk about truth in seemingly unrelativized ways. We use an operator 'It is true that' governed by the schema 'It is true that P iff P', and we use a predicate of claims, beliefs, thoughts, and propositions that is governed by the principle 'X's claim/X's belief/the claim/the thought/the proposition that P is true iff P'. Suppose one is in a position to make a disquotational remark of the following form: *'S' is being used to make the claim that S.*[16] In such settings, a disquotational remark about truth is also licensed: *The claim being made by 'S' is true iff S.*[17]

Let us call concepts of truth that satisfy simple principles of the sort just alluded to 'disquotational concepts of truth'.[18,19] Relativists avail

[16] Example: 'Snow is white' is being used to make the claim that snow is white. Of course, as we are all aware, such claims cannot be made in cases where S has a meaning in the context of utterance different from its meaning in the context of attribution (which, for example, is often the case for sentences involving paradigm indexicals like 'I', 'now', or 'here').

[17] Note the expressive flexibility of the truth predicate over the truth operator. Its ability to combine with all sorts of determiner phrases gives it expressive power that someone saddled only with the operator would be unable to achieve without propositional quantification.

[18] The expression 'disquotational truth' is sometimes reserved for a predicate of sentences whose schema involves the removal of quotes from one side to the other, namely: 'S' is true iff S. In the context of philosophical debate where we do not ignore the fact that sentences have different contents at different contexts of use, it is best not to play along with the pretence that this sentential concept is an ordinary and acceptable one.

[19] Obviously, paradoxes make matters a lot more complicated. We shall not be pursuing the question of whether and how a disquotational concept of truth can steer a

themselves of a disquotational truth concept as well as a relative concept of truth. They do not do this merely to pay lip service to common sense. They themselves make important use of a disquotational concept in characterizing the disagreements to which they intend their relativist machinery to apply. Thus, for example, the data for which relativists about personal taste are trying to provide an account include claims that deploy disquotatonal concepts. 'Fred said that Vegemite is delicious. But that is false.' The point of their view is to explain the legitimacy of each of a competing set of disquotational verdicts, not to discount all those verdicts as relying on pernicious truth and falsity predicates.

Let us provide an overview of the relativist's repertoire of truth predicates. We begin with the notion of a content being *true for an agent*. We have already been introduced to the idea of a content being true at a sequence of indices, where those indices are particular settings on relevant parameters. Thus, for Kaplan, the content of 'John is sitting' will be true at various <world, time> pairs and false at others. Reflection on the cases of modality, time, and location makes it clear that certain particular settings along the relevant parameters bear heavily on the acceptability of an assertion. Thus, suppose Tim asserts at t 'Bill is sitting'. On the Kaplanian model, the proposition that he asserts is true at some times and false at others. But clearly, t is the time that is crucially relevant to the assertability of 'Bill is sitting'. Let us call this *the operative point of evaluation* along the time parameter. Similarly, while the content is true relative to this or that world, there will be a particular world that is crucial for the assertability of 'Bill is sitting'—namely, the world in which the utterance takes place. This is the operative point of evaluation along the world parameter.[20]

safe path through the Liar and related puzzles. (Note that the challenge is more serious for the predicate 'is true' than for the operator 'It is true that'.) Since contemporary relativists are rarely motivated by such puzzles, this restriction on our discussion does not seem unfair. Note that, as we are using 'disquotational truth', it is no requirement on a disquotational concept of truth that its semantical life be exhausted or fully captured by the simple axioms alone—only that it obey them.

[20] Quite obviously, in so far as semantic values are highly parameterized, the ability to use and understand a language will require not merely an ability to know the semantic values of expressions, but also to recognize operative parameter settings in contexts. It follows that a theory of semantic value of this type will not satisfy a constraint that Gareth Evans and others felt was a constraint on any acceptable theory of meaning: knowing the theory of meaning should suffice for understanding the language. (See, e.g., Evans (1985).) One might try to develop a critique of meaning theories with 'thin' semantic values along these lines, though we are not sufficiently compelled by the relevant premiss to be moved to do so ourselves.

With this notion of *an operative setting* in place, it will be natural to talk about a content being *true* or *false for an agent on an occasion where the content is expressed*. Let C be a content that has a truth value only relative to parameters $m_1 \ldots m_n$. An assertion of C by some agent on an occasion O *is true for the agent* on O iff the content is true relative to the settings of $m_1 \ldots m_n$ that are operative for the agent on O.[21] It is then natural to embrace something like the following norm of assertion:

(NA) An agent should assert a content P on an occasion O only if P is true for the agent on O.[22]

We are now in a position to see how the relativist can introduce a disquotational operator 'It is true that' into the object language. The central principle is DQ1:

DQ1: The content *It is true that P* is true at an *n*-tuple iff the content P is true at that *n*-tuple.

If we assume that every claim is either true or false at any *n*-tuple (and we assume a standard account of 'iff'), it is now easy to see that claims of the form *It is true that P iff P* will be true at all *n*-tuples.[23]

Accompanying this disquotational operator, a predicate of claims and beliefs can be introduced, governed by the following schema:

DQ2: *The claim that P is true* is true at an *n*-tuple iff P is true at that *n*-tuple.

[21] Call a claim 'variable' if it is true at some indices but not at others. Can a relativist coherently claim that all contents are variable? Deploying now a Platonic theme, one might wonder whether the thought that some contents are variable could itself be variable. It does not seem to be variable with respect to time and world. So what parameter could generate variation in that case? One might toy with the idea that the truth of relativism, as opposed to, say, a contextual approach to all the phenomena, is itself judge-relative. We do not know what mileage might be got from relativism at the level of metasemantics. We hope to nip relativism in the bud well before these heady moves are entertained.

[22] We acknowledge that other (perhaps complementary) proposals are possible. For a more complicated proposal, see MacFarlane to (2005*b*). As a default we assume the norm in the text. Very few of the critical points that we raise in the course of this monograph turn on that choice.

[23] If a content may be neither true nor false relative to an *n*-tuple, then (among other things) one needs a special account of how to evaluate a biconditional relative to an *n*-tuple where one or both of the flanking contents are neither true nor false relative to that *n*-tuple.

The key move that we are interested in here is that of allowing for an ordinary truth predicate that can be predicated of parameter-sensitive contents and that functions in such a way that some parameter-sensitive content, C, is true at an *n*-tuple iff the content *The claim that C is true* is true at that *n*-tuple.[24] The introduction of such a predicate is what we call 'Disquotation'.[25,26]

By recognizing these constructions as legitimate, the relativist makes room for ordinary ways of talking about truth even while advocating a fundamental semantic framework in which it is the relations *true at* and *false at* that are explanatorily fundamental. So our hypothetical relativist about coldness, for example, can say that, when people move seamlessly from 'It is cold' to 'It is true that it is cold', it is a benign disquotational truth operator that is being deployed, one that is perfectly consistent with a relativist semantical framework.

Note that this allows for ordinary inferences concerning contradictoriness and incompatibility. For example, one might well wish to claim that, if a pair of contents is contradictory (as opposed to merely incompatible), then one of them is true, and that, if a pair of claims is incompatible, then one of them is false. Such claims can now be advanced using the relevant disquotational predicates.[27]

Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports

Relativists want to be able to say that, if Tim asserts 'Apples are delicious' and Crispin asserts 'Apples are not delicious', where each is speaking sincerely, then Tim believes that apples are delicious, and Crispin

[24] We note in passing that logical space allows for a monadic truth predicate and the 'It is true that' operator to behave in interestingly different ways. For example, one *could* have a view where some thin content c is true at an *n*-tuple iff *It is true that c* is true at that *n*-tuple but the content *The content c is true* is false at all *n*-tuples. We assume that the relativist will not be so guarded and, in particular, will have a monadic truth predicate that allows him to make claims of the form 'Semantic content c is true'.

[25] Of course, the relativist can also introduce a different monadic predicate 'truth *simpliciter*', where a claim is true *simpliciter* iff it is true at all indices, and caution us that, while she may be willing to assert 'It is cold' and 'It is true that it is cold', she will never assert 'It is true *simpliciter* that it is cold'.

[26] Note that we do *not* assume that the truth predicate will in addition obey an eternality principle to the effect that if *C is true* is true at an *n*-tuple then *C was always true* and *C will always be true* are true at that *n*-tuple.

[27] Again, we assume that a content is either true or false relative to any *n*-tuple. Of course, any attempt to capture the idea of being 'formally contradictory' will have to supplement the discussion with some suitable concept of logical truth.

believes that they are not. We now briefly outline how this should be accommodated within a relativistic framework.

First, note that, while a semantic value of a sentence S in a context C may, according to the relativist, be true for Crispin, but not for Tim, according to operative values of a parameter R, a claim of the form (A) need not itself be variable in this way.

A. S in C has P as its semantic value.

Suppose, for example, we are relativists about 'delicious': claims of the form (B) are true relative to a world, time, and standard of taste:

B. Apples are delicious.[28]

As a result of different operative standards, there is a variability of the sort described earlier: (B) may be true for Crispin but not for Tim. Suppose Crispin utters (B). Consider Tim's assertion of (C):

C. Crispin's utterance of 'Apples are delicious' had as its semantic value the content that apples are delicious.

The relativist's picture is that Tim's standard of taste has nothing whatsoever to do with whether this metalinguistic claim is true for him, since the possession of that thin semantic value by the utterance has nothing whatsoever to do with whichever standards of taste might be operative. In short, while various thin semantic values may vary in whether they are true or false for someone according to an operative standard, that standard is irrelevant to the truth of a metalinguistic claim to the effect that an utterance has one or other of those semantic values. Let us call this phenomenon *non-relativity of semantic value*.

Having embraced non-relativity of semantic value reports, one may well adopt a similar ideology of non-relativity for belief ascriptions. If one does, we get the result that, if Tim and Crispin assert (D)

D. Sabrina believes that apples are delicious,

those assertions cannot vary in truth value according to the difference in operative standards of taste between Tim's and Crispin's contexts. A bit more precisely: on the version of relativism we are imagining, whatever variability there is in truth value of (D) will have to do with variability associated with the verb 'believe'. Thus, for example, it is clear that the

[28] We shall have plenty more to say about claims of this form in Chapter 4.

relativist will want to say that the contents of sentences of the form 'X believes P' will be variable with respect to times and worlds.[29] The point we now want to emphasize is that, even though P may be parameterized in various ways, that will not in itself make the belief ascription 'X believes that P' true variable with respect to each parameter associated with P. Thus, for example, assuming that 'believes' is not in general parameterized to a standard of taste, (D) will not be variable with respect to standards of taste. Call this putative phenomenon the *non-relativity of belief*.[30]

Non-relativity of belief sits well with a view according to which thin propositions are perfectly suitable objects of the attitudes (just as they are the semantic value of sentences). On this view, (D) is true just in case X committed herself doxastically to the thin content that apples are delicious. This is enough to make it true for an ascriber that X believes that apples are delicious, whatever the standards of taste of the ascriber.[31]

This step is important in so far as one wishes it to be straightforward to assert 'A and B have contradictory beliefs' in a case where A sincerely utters 'Apples are delicious' and B sincerely utters 'Apples are not delicious', and to assert 'A and B share a belief' in a case where A and B sincerely utter 'Apples are delicious'. For without non-relativity of belief it may, for example, be quite tricky to move from

> A and B sincerely uttered 'Apples are delicious'

and

> 'Apples are delicious', as both were using it, has as its semantic value the content *apples are delicious*

to

> A and B believe that apples are delicious.

[29] If one is Lewis, one will also think that belief ascriptions are parameterized to a standard of precision. (For relevant discussion, see Chapter 3.)

[30] We shall look at a somewhat restricted version of the non-relativity thesis, based on Tamina Stephenson's work, in Chapter 4.

[31] That thin propositions are suitable objects of the attitudes is, of course, compatible with the thesis that there is a rule connecting belief in thin contents with belief in thick content. The relativist might, for example, suppose that X believes the thin content *apples are delicious* iff X believes the thick content *apples are delicious for X*. We discuss the relevant choice points in Chapter 4.

Suppose, for example, one treated 'A believes apples are delicious' as itself variable to a standard. One might, for example, think 'A believes apples are delicious' is true relative to A's standard of taste but not relative to B's standard. On that story, 'A and B believe apples are delicious' may never be assertable, since it may be that, relative to any operative standard, the conjunction comes out false.

ASSESSSOR SENSITIVITY

Suppose an utterance of some sentence S has semantic value V and that V is true relative to the parameter value operative for one onlooker but false relative to a second onlooker. Let us say that an utterance u has 'an assessor sensitive semantic value' iff there are two assessors such that the content *u has a semantic value that is true* is true for one assessor and false for another.[32,33] The form of relativism we have just outlined will give rise to assessor sensitivity of that sort. After all, assuming the principles of disquotational truth outlined in the previous section, the claim *V is true* is true for one onlooker and false for the second. Assuming the non-relativity of semantic value, the claim *u has semantic value V* will be true for one onlooker and false for the second. Putting all this together, the claim *u has semantic value V and V is true* is true for the first onlooker, while *u has semantic value V and V is false* is true for the second. Note, then, that the phenomenon of assessor sensitivity of semantic value is forced on one once one has embraced (i) disquotational truth, (ii) non-relativity of semantic value ascription, and (iii) the relevant variability of operative parameter values between assessors.[34]

Let us say that an assertoric act A is assessor sensitive iff the claim *A is true* is true for one assessor and false for another. Assuming the

[32] The ideology of assessor sensitivity is taken from MacFarlane. For the purpose of maximal clarity we distinguish semantic value sensitivity from assertion sensitivity in what follows.

[33] We realize that for some purposes it may be useful to extrapolate to possible assessors, though we shall not do so here.

[34] Actually, disquotational truth is not playing a fundamental role here. One might instead gloss assessor sensitivity this way: an utterance u has an assessor sensitive semantic value iff there are two assessors such that the content *u has P as its semantic value* is true for both assessors while the content P is true for one assessor and not for the other. Understood in this way, the phenomenon can arise even if no concept of disquotational truth is in play.

eminently natural principle that an assertion is true iff the semantic value of that assertion is true, the two-onlooker scenario described will also give rise to the assessor sensitivity of assertoric acts.[35]

RELATIVISM: TAKING STOCK

Crispin walks into the antechamber of the baths from the outside and declares 'The antechamber is not cold'. Tim walks in from the hot baths and declares 'The antechamber is cold'. Let us look at the situation through the lens of the package just presented.

Tim can properly assert 'The antechamber is cold', since the content is true for him. Tim can similarly assert (1) and (2) by DQ1:

1. It is true that the antechamber is cold.
2. It is false that the antechamber is not cold.

He can also assert (3):

3. The proposition *that the antechamber is cold* is true.

And so on, given DQ1 and DQ2. Given the disquotational rules and the non-relativity of semantic value ascription, Tim can also reason:

4. Crispin's utterance meant that the antechamber is not cold and so what he expressed by his utterance was false (even though it was true for him).

Given the disquotational rules and the non-relativity of belief ascription, he can claim further:

5. Crispin believes the proposition *that the antechamber is not cold* and that belief is false (even though what he believes is true for him)

and

6. If what I have claimed is true, then what Crispin is claiming is false and vice versa. Both Crispin and I believe what we are claiming. So, while what I say is true for me and what Crispin says is true for Crispin, it turns out that Crispin and I have incompatible views.

[35] Beliefs will also naturally be assessor sensitive: in the framework described, claims of the form 'Belief B is true' (where 'B' refers to a particular belief state) will be true for one assessor and false for the other in the situation we initially described.

These are the kinds of claims that the relativist wants to make. The package of Proliferation, Disquotation, and Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports provides an elegant justification for those claims. Meanwhile, in the absence of one or more elements of that package, certain of the claims will be thrown into doubt. Proliferation allows the true-for ideology to take hold in this area. Disquotational truth concepts figure in all of the numbered claims above. Meanwhile, in the absence of Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports, the propriety of Tim's acceptance of (4), (5), and (6) would be thrown into question. Note, moreover, that there is no need for some extra axiom of 'assessor sensitivity' to be thrown into the relativist mix: as we have noted, that phenomenon falls out of the three-pronged set of commitments outlined above.

Before moving on to illustrate some arguments in favour of relativism, we briefly compare it to three competing positions: contextualism, non-indexical contextualism, and non-relativistic views according to which propositional skeletons function as semantic values.

RELATIVISM AND CONTEXTUALISM

Relativism should be contrasted with a more standard semantical account of predications involving 'cold', a version of the so-called contextualist approach alluded to earlier. On that view, 'The antechamber is cold' is used to make different claims in different contexts of use. Two speakers can at the same time express compatible contents by 'The antechamber is cold' and 'The antechamber is not cold' (even assuming a constant content for the incomplete definite description 'the antechamber'), and this fact can be used to explain the legitimacy of certain superficially conflicting speeches. Now the basic commitment of contextualism about 'is cold' is that sentences containing it express different contents in different contexts of use (on account of the context sensitivity of 'is cold' and not merely due to other context-sensitive features of that sentence). Strictly speaking, that barebones commitment does not prohibit the kind of parameterization of contents that the relativist is interested in. So the version of contextualism for 'is cold' that we wish to contrast relativism with is a *Simplicity-friendly* one: it combines the thesis that the contents of sentences involving 'is cold' vary from context to context with the thesis that at a context a sentence expresses a proposition of the sort countenanced by Simplicity.

Assuming that contextualism is used to render the conflict between Aristotle and Thales superficial, each will be construed as expressing a true proposition (of a non-relativist sort) on account of variation in content that is not signalled by any superficial feature of their utterances. As noted earlier, the most straightforward contextualism would construe Thales as saying that the antechamber is cold for Thales and Aristotle as saying that it is not cold for Aristotle. While the relativist approach licenses Thales to say 'Aristotle is not saying something true', the version of contextualism under consideration will not license any such application of a disquotational truth predicate. For a further contrast between relativism and contextualism, note that, in so far as Thales is using 'The antechamber is not cold' to express the (false) proposition that the antechamber is not cold for Thales, he cannot truly say 'Aristotle is using the sentence ''The antechamber is not cold'' to make the claim that the antechamber is not cold'. Nor can Thales truly say 'Aristotle and I have expressed incompatible views'.

RELATIVISM AND NON-INDEXICAL CONTEXTUALISM

Some more complicated—and less relativist-sounding—positions are possible if one endorses Proliferation and Disquotation, but introduces a monadic truth predicate for assertoric acts (or for sentences at contexts, or for utterances) that is not tied in the expected way to disquotational truth predicate for propositions/contents. Ignoring matters of tense for a minute (we shall return to them later), the natural account of truth for sentences at contexts is given by the principle:

> *P1*. If S expresses the content P at context C, then S is true at C iff the content P is true.

(Note that, in so far as the disquotational concept can be predicated of thin semantic values, the principle above can allow for thin values of P.) Meanwhile, the natural account of assertion and utterance truth is similar:

> *P2*. An assertion/utterance with the content P is true iff the content P is true.

In contravention of such principles, John MacFarlane (2007*b*: 240–51, forthcoming *a*) describes a position that he calls 'non-indexical contextualism'. This view is different from relativism, but, for reasons we will now make clear, we do not think this view occupies an interesting position in logical space. We will briefly outline the view, describe what we find troubling about it, and then, for the remainder of this book, leave it behind.

Non-indexical contextualism is a view that endorses proliferation, but combines it with a Kaplanian account of truth of a sentence at a context.

> If c is a context, then an occurrence of φ in c is true iff the content expressed by φ in this context is true when evaluated with respect to the circumstance of the context. (Kaplan 1989: 522)

As an illustration, consider (as MacFarlane does in 2007*a*) a non-indexical contextualism that introduces a 'counts-as' parameter to the circumstance of evaluation. This parameter determines whether something counts as having a property. He says:

> let's think of a circumstance of evaluation as an ordered pair consisting of a world and a 'counts-as' parameter, which we can model as a function from properties to intensions (functions from worlds to extensions). The 'counts-as' parameter is so called because it fixes what things have to be like in order to *count as* having the property of tallness (or any other property) at a circumstance of evaluation. (MacFarlane 2007*b*: 246)

He then adds:

> Following Kaplan, we say that an occurrence of a sentence is true just in case the proposition expressed is true at the circumstance of the context. (ibid.)

The basic idea is that the truth of an assertion will be given not by (P1), but by something like (P3):

> *P3*. An assertion/utterance with the content P is true iff the content P is true for the assertor.[36]

Sentence truth at a context is understood as (P4):

> *P4*. If S expresses the content P at context C, then S is true at C iff the content P is true at C.

As applied to 'It is cold', this position will have both Crispin and Tim saying to each other 'Your assertion was true' and (assuming they have

[36] Where 'true for' is understood as in the section 'Disquotation' above.

learned some Kaplanesque ideology) 'The sentence "It is cold" is true at your context'. This is a kind of anti-Simplicity position, but, owing to its distinctive treatment of assertional truth/truth of sentences at contexts, it enjoins speeches that are less relativist in flavour.

Obviously, non-indexical contextualism cannot get off the ground if we accept the natural principles (P1) and (P2) connecting truth of contents with utterance/assertion truth. If I say 'You just made the claim that apples are delicious' and 'The claim that apples are delicious is false', then, in so far as I accept (P1) and (P2), I will be forced to the conclusion 'Your assertion was false'. Assuming that your assertion was true for you, I will have contradicted the tenets of non-indexical contextualism.

As we have seen, MacFarlane, on behalf of the non-indexical contextualist, suggests the possibility of abandoning principles such as (P1) and (P2). But this abandonment should not be taken lightly. Indeed, by our lights, it delivers absolutely bizarre results. Thus, the non-indexical contextualist package recommends that Tim says to Crispin:

> Your utterance is true but the claim that you are making by your utterance is not true

and

> Your assertion is true but the proposition that you are expressing by your assertion is not true.

Relatedly, given factivity for 'know' (that is, that X knows P can be true for Y only if P is true for Y), it will recommend that Tim say:

> You know that your assertion is true and you know that your assertion is an assertion that it is not cold and you are not half bad at deducing the obvious, but you are in no position to know that it is not cold.

In response to this kind of concern, John MacFarlane (forthcoming *a*) claims that such negative reactions are not to be trusted, since 'utterance truth' is a technical term. He says:

> I'm not sure we should be bothered by it once we realize that utterance truth is a technical notion. In ordinary speech, people predicate truth of propositions (that is, of what is said or asserted or believed), not of utterances. If utterance truth is a technical notion, we had better make sure our intuitions about it are in line with our theories, not the other way around. Rejecting a theory because it makes predictions about utterance truth that 'sound funny' is not sound methodology. (MacFarlane forthcoming *a*)

But if utterance truth is an uninteresting, utterly technical notion, then it is hard to see how it can matter to the debate: all relativists can agree to the cogency of a property BLAH that holds of an assertoric act iff the proposition is true for the assertor. For the account to be interesting, it has to connect with data that are intuitive.

What can give non-indexical contextualism an inappropriate allure is a mistaken view of tense. In providing *prima facie* motivation for non-indexical contextualism, MacFarlane appeals to the intuition that, when someone said 'I am sitting' yesterday, they said something true if they were sitting yesterday even if they are not sitting today. On the face of it, this can seem like a counterexample to the principle (P2) of assertion truth provided earlier.

Two points are important here. First, notice that the intuition being appealed to is an intuition about the content of what was said, and seems hardly explicable in terms of a wholly technical notion of utterance truth. Notice secondly that, in so far as one is careful about tense, the data provide no counterexample at all. The principles (P1) and (P2) simplify away from matters of tense, something one can sometimes do to ease presentation when issues about time can be screened off. Obviously, when tense plays a pertinent role in the example, one cannot do this. Let us assume that one does opt for contents that are non-specific about time and hence denies what we earlier called an eternality principle of truth (which is certainly left open by the disquotational conception).[37] Then we shall have to be careful about tense in our account of assertoric truth:

P5. An assertion in the past was true iff its content *was then* true.

Once one is careful in this way, the advocate of contents that are non-specific about time can explain MacFarlane's data perfectly well. The assertion of 'I am sitting' yesterday was true because the content of that assertion was true then. A proponent of contents that are non-specific about time will be driven to non-indexical contextualism only by failing to see (i) that the problematic data can be handled by keeping track of the tense on the copula and (ii) that the problematic data involve intuitions about the contents themselves and thus cannot be explained away by utterance truth shenanigans.

[37] If contents are specific about time, the 'sitting' data have even less relevance to non-indexical contextualism, since, if contents are specific in that way, the content of 'I am sitting' as uttered by me today is not the same as yesterday.

In short, when the smoke has cleared, we find it hard to see any significant avenues opened up by non-indexical contextualism. The distinctive ideas about truth that drive Analytic relativism are nicely captured by a combination of parameterization, disquotation, and non-relativity of belief/semantic value.[38]

RELATIVISM AND PROPOSITIONAL SKELETONS

Philosophers such as Sperber and Wilson, Carston, Bach, and Soames deny Simplicity because they think so-called *propositional skeletons* can be the semantic values of sentences (relative to contexts). They endorse this anti-Simplicity position without, it seems, endorsing either relativism or anything like non-indexical contextualism. These philosophers simply hold that semantics, in some cases, generates semantic values for sentences that fail to 'reach the level of propositionality'. Such subpropositional semantic values are neither true nor false. They are not the proper objects of truth evaluability. Such a view might naturally be supplemented with the thesis that it is certain richer items—traditional propositions—that are true, false, contradictory, and so on.

Note that views of this kind do not go in for Disquotation, and this is where they appear to part company with relativists.[39] Suppose the semantic value of some utterance u is subpropositional. Then, according to these views, there is no ordinary notion of truth according to which 'The semantic value of u is true' is acceptable. On a natural understanding of these views, while the semantic value of u is subpropositional, 'The semantic value of u is true' is not subpropositional: it expresses a proposition that is straightforwardly false. Similar points extend to the notion of contradictoriness: on these views, the semantic contents of any pair of utterances of 'It is cold' and 'It is not cold' do not contradict each other, since those semantic contents are not truth-evaluable.

[38] We also note in passing that, since non-indexical contextualism is committed to thin contents, it is also vulnerable to most of the arguments in the main text.

[39] Despite this, some may persist in the suspicion that the difference between the relativist and the skeleton lover is ultimately terminological. We shall not attempt to dispel all such suspicions here. We should also mention that there are important differences between the various authors we have classified as proponents of propositional skeletons. For example, some of them do not like to describe these objects as 'semantic values' (they prefer to say only that sentences relative to contexts express skeletons and avoid talk of semantic values altogether).

It is natural for proponents of this view to deny that semantic values of utterances are suitable *relata* for the belief relation, reserving that role for traditional propositions. So, for example, such a view might maintain that the semantic value of 'John believes that it is raining' is not a truth-evaluable proposition on account of the fact that the semantic value underspecifies an object of belief. Only various completions—which go beyond the semantic value of the sentence—select a putative object of belief from the candidates left open by the semantic value.[40]

The view that semantic values can be propositional skeletons is not the primary target of this book, and we do not take the arguments that follow to constitute a decisive refutation of this particular alternative to Simplicity. But certain of the considerations that follow are evidentially relevant: first, in so far as skeleton lovers depend on the kinds of reporting tests that we criticize in Chapter 2, it is one of our targets; secondly, if the agreement test introduced in Chapter 2 is accepted, that constitutes a positive argument against propositional skeletons as semantic values (since these are not objects we can agree or disagree over).

MORE ON THE MOTIVATION FOR RELATIVISM: OPPOSITION TO CONTEXTUALISM

There are no obvious formal obstacles to the kinds of parameterizations of truth that we described above. The interesting question is whether such moves are well motivated and whether they fit well with the evidence. We have already mentioned one kind of motivation—one that turns on an appeal to operators. But there is another style of argument, one that is even more prominent in contemporary discussion. This involves data or appeal to intuitions that support the view that there is stability of content across a variety of contexts where the contextualist is committed to thinking that content varies. These arguments are the topic of Chapter 2. In the remainder of this chapter we simply sketch the argumentative strategies and provide some illustrations.

[40] There are further decision points that raise tricky issues for a view of this sort. Do we say that 'That it is raining is the semantic value of "It is raining" and is neither true nor false' semantically expresses a truth? Or do we instead say that the semantic value of the latter sentence is not a truth-evaluable proposition? (This requires an account of the connection between expressions of the form 'The semantic value of S' and phrases of the form 'That S'.) We shall not be exploring the comparative merits of each answer in this work.

Some philosophically important domains of discourse have the following peculiar set of properties: on the one hand, it is tempting to postulate semantic context sensitivity because there seems to be no single Simplicity-conducive proposition that can serve as the subject matter across all contexts of utterances. On the other hand, these cases seem to exhibit common objects of belief and assertion across contexts. Once stable attitude and assertoric act contents of this kind are established, one is well on one's way to relativism. For we have now a situation where there is a stable content, but not of the sort that Simplicity can endorse, and moreover one that can serve as the object of propositional attitudes and illocutionary acts. The recommended conclusion is that the relevant objects of thought are not ones that conform to the traditional notion of a proposition, and whose fundamental modes of evaluation are of the parameterized type envisaged by relativists. When disquotational truth predicates are then postulated as a way of making sense of our practice of ascribing truth and falsity to these contents, the relativist architecture is firmly in place.

As relativists see things, their opponents are left in an uncomfortable situation: they must either deny stable content across contexts when there is ample evidence for its presence; or else they must claim that the stable content instantiates truth *simpliciter* or falsity *simpliciter* even when that is wildly implausible. Truth relativists, in effect, use an inference to the best explanation: they present data that they claim to be able to handle better than any competing theory.

The claims about content stability are often backed up by variations on what in Chapter 2 we call *disquotational reporting arguments*. Before we turn to an evaluation of those arguments, we turn briefly to two illustrations of these arguments in action.

Illustration One: Epistemic Modals

Moriarty's utterance of 'Holmes might have gone to Paris' seems to have the following puzzling set of properties:[41]

(*a*) Its truth value depends in some way on Moriarty's epistemic state, i.e., on whether Holmes's going to Paris is compatible with some body of knowledge—e.g., what Moriarty knows, or what

[41] See this kind of argument at work in Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson (2005), Egan (2007), Stephenson (2007*b*), and MacFarlane (forthcoming *b*). For reservations see Hawthorne (2007).

Moriarty and his interlocutors among them know—at the time of his utterance.

(*b*) Moriarty's utterance can be disquotationally reported by 'He said that Holmes might have gone to Paris' (and we can do this no matter what the reporter's epistemic state is like).

(*c*) Assuming Moriarty spoke sincerely, we are also entitled to the disquotational belief report 'Moriarty believes that Holmes might have gone to Paris'.

(*d*) An eavesdropper with more knowledge than Moriarty, e.g., Holmes, who knows that Holmes is not in Paris, can evaluate Moriarty's claim as false based on what he knows (assuming he knows that he is not in Paris). In so doing he *disagrees* with what Moriarty *said* and (on the assumption of sincerity) *believes*.

The connection between epistemic modals and epistemic state makes it seem natural to suppose that the semantics for the epistemic 'might' is context sensitive in some way (i.e., (*a*)). However, the disquotational reporting data suggest that there is inter-contextual content stability. Points (*b*)–(*d*) are evidence to that effect. The challenge is to reconcile these apparently conflicting data points. The relativist thinks that (*b*)–(*d*) rule out the view that epistemic modals are context-sensitive expressions (at least in a traditional way). The traditional alternative to contextualism is invariantism—that is, the view that there is no semantic content variability between contexts of utterance. A flat-footed version of invariantism—one that operates with Simplicity—claims that one and the same proposition—*that Holmes might be in Paris*—can be evaluated for truth and falsity *simpliciter* regardless of the epistemic state of the person asserting that proposition. This in turn encourages denying (*a*), which seems extremely implausible.

At this point, some see relativism as coming to the rescue. The relativist claims to be able to explain the data pattern better than contextualists and flat-footed invariantists. Building on the approach just outlined, we may propose a body of information parameter, claiming that the content that Holmes might be in Paris is true or false only relative to an *n*-tuple that includes (at least) a setting for world, time, and body of information parameters. If Watson knows that Holmes is not in Paris and Moriarty does not, then, in so far as Watson's own epistemic state is operative when he says 'Holmes couldn't be in Paris', he says something that is true for him, and, in so far as Moriarty's epistemic

state is operative, 'Holmes might be in Paris' is true for him—that is, Moriarty. Since the content of 'Holmes might be in Paris' is the same in each of their mouths, it is no surprise that Watson can disquotationally report and, assuming non-relativity of belief, it is no surprise that the belief ascription to Moriarty is insensitive to the body of information that is operative for Watson when he asserts 'Holmes might be in Paris'. Moreover, since the content of the claim 'Holmes might be in Paris' is the same in each of their mouths, the intuition that they have a difference of opinion about the same subject matter can, it seems, be sustained. Meanwhile, in so far as Watson has a disquotational truth predicate at his disposal, he can consistently account for a respect in which Moriarty is alethically faultless—what he says is true for him—and also for a respect in which Watson can challenge him with 'The proposition that he expresses is false'.[42]

This view contrasts sharply with contextualism, since the content Moriarty expresses does not encode a particular body of knowledge. The body of knowledge that is operative for Moriarty figures only as a setting on a parameter in the circumstance of evaluation. Rather than focus on the various ways that argumentation might now proceed, we merely wish for now to underscore the key pair of moving parts: first, there is a content stability premiss, driven by some combination of reporting data and agreement intuitions; secondly, we have the idea that no traditional proposition can plausibly play the role of the stable content.

This pattern of argumentation is typical of contemporary relativists. We limit ourselves to one further illustration.

Illustration Two: Predicates of Taste

More or less the same pattern of argument, based on the same kinds of assumptions about content stability, is used to support anti-Simplicity semantics for so-called predicates of personal taste ('fun', 'tasty', 'disgusting', and so on). Consider an utterance by Watson of 'Roller coasters are fun'.[43] It seems plausible that this claim is in some way indexed to the preferences of the speaker—that is, there is some kind of sensitivity to the context of utterance (the operative preference being typically that of the speaker, though we may allow for cases where it is some other

[42] For a story along these lines, see Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson (2005) and MacFarlane (forthcoming *b*).

[43] The example is in Lasersohn (2005: 643).

contextually salient preference). On the other hand, as relativists point out, there are data that militate in favour of content stability.

(*a*) It seems that such utterances can be reported disquotationally, i.e., we can, no matter what our own context,[44] report by uttering 'Watson said that roller coasters are/were fun' (let us not fuss too much about tense issues for now). This obviously contrasts markedly with various paradigmatically context-dependent expressions. Consider 'I'. If Watson says 'I am on a roller coaster', Holmes cannot report this by uttering 'Watson said that I am on a roller coaster'. If 'fun' meant something different in Holmes's mouth from what it means in Watson's mouth, then one might expect the report to be infelicitous.

(*b*) Assuming sincerity, we can also use 'fun' to report the content of Watson's belief: 'He believes that roller coasters are fun.'

(*c*) We take there to be disagreement between someone who utters 'Roller coasters are fun' and 'Roller coasters are not fun'. They have made incompatible commitments (see Lasersohn 2005). Again, this is not predicted by the contextualist.

On the other hand, the relativist will emphasize the awkwardness of thinking that some traditional proposition is the common content. He will argue that this risks giving up altogether on the intuition that Watson's preferences are constitutively relevant to the correctness of his utterances of 'Roller coasters are fun'.[45] For to think that they are constitutively relevant and to think that the proposition is constant across contexts is to require that his preferences be constitutively relevant to a total stranger who says 'Roller coasters are fun'.

By now, the reader should readily anticipate the shape of the relativist's solution. The relativist will then insist that the content of 'Roller coasters are fun' is to be evaluated for truth relative to an *n*-tuple that includes, at least, a world, a time, and a standard of taste. Here is Peter Lasersohn (2005: 662–3), who carefully develops such an approach for predicates of personal taste:

This . . . can be implemented in Kaplan's system with a relatively small adjustment. And while it may seem out of the spirit of Kaplan's analysis to leave

[44] For important qualifications, see Chapter 2.

[45] This point plays a crucial role in Lasersohn (2005). See also Lasersohn (forthcoming).

some sensitivity to context unresolved at the level of content, this was actually part of Kaplan's system all along . . . Specifically, Kaplan treated the contents of sentences as (characteristic functions of) sets of time–world pairs. Contexts were assumed to provide a time and world, and a sentence N was defined as true in a context *c* iff the time and world of *c* were in the content of N. In this way, the context plays a role not only in deriving the content from the character, but also in deriving the truth value from the content. This may not be the same *kind* of context dependence as that involved in deriving contents from characters, but it is context dependence nonetheless, and we can exploit it in analyzing predicates of personal taste.

The content of 'Roller coasters are fun' is then constant—though 'non-specific' with respect to preferences—across contexts. The constitutive relevance of the speaker's preferences to claims made by him concerning fun can also be vindicated. After all, in a standard setting where the speaker's preferences are operative, the inference from 'X is fun for me' to 'X is fun' will never take us from a content that is true for the speaker to one that is false for the speaker. Meanwhile, the sense that people who say 'Roller coasters are not fun' are in some sense correct can be explained by appeal to the 'true-for' construction. Finally, a claim of incompatibility between those who say 'Roller coasters are fun' and those who say 'Roller coasters are not fun' can be explained by appeal to disquotational truth and falsity. When one party says 'If what I say is true, then what they say is false', she expresses a content that is true for her, and hence, properly assertable (assuming that assertability is to be explained in terms of *true-for*).

We have described two ways of deploying a relativist-style semantics. There are many other areas of discourse for which a similar model has been proposed. In general, these are areas where, on the one hand, there seem to be significant *prima facie* data for semantic uniformity of certain sentences across a large range of cases, but where, on the other hand, a case against some constant traditional truth condition across that range of cases can seemingly be made out. Such areas include, but are not limited to, epistemic modals and evaluative claims (see above), conditionals (see, e.g., Weatherson forthcoming), knowledge claims (MacFarlane 2005*a*), colour (Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson 2005), and future contingents (MacFarlane forthcoming *c*).[46]

[46] Those familiar with recent literature on future contingents might be interested to note that certain versions of supervaluationism for the problem of future contingents count as relativist by our three-pronged criterion. In brief: suppose our metalanguage

OUR PLAN

As this chapter has emphasized, two styles of argument are particularly important in the anti-Simplicity literature.[47]

Lewis and Kaplan use an 'Operator Argument' against T1. They claim that we cannot provide a compositional semantics for 'feature shifting operators' unless we reject T1. The Operator Argument is the main topic of Chapter 3. There we argue that Lewis and Kaplan have failed to provide good arguments for classifying certain temporal expressions as operators, and argue that, even if they were operators, it would not follow that Simplicity should be rejected.

Though inspired by Kaplan and/or Lewis, relativists typically do not feel constrained by the Operator Argument. As we have seen, their alternative resource consists of data that seem to support stability of content in areas where contextualism is the main alternative view. Such data include:

(*a*) cases where disquotational saying reports or belief reports provide evidence of inter-contextual shared content, despite the initial appearance of context sensitivity;

(*b*) accompanying patterns of agreement and disagreement intuitions.

posits a tree of paths, where paths fork at various nodes, where propositions are true relative to paths, and where there is no privileged path in reality. Let a proposition P be supertrue at a point just in case all paths that share the segment up to the point are ones relative to which P is true. Since the supertruth of propositions is relativized to paths, it is parameterized. Since there is no privileged path, there is no fundamental property of truth *simpliciter* for propositions. Further, as MacFarlane notes, the supervaluationist can introduce a disquotational truth predicate for propositions (MacFarlane forthcoming *c*). In so far as this supervaluationalist also embraces non-relativity of semantic value and belief ascriptions, the resulting position will have all the key elements of a relativist position.

[47] There are objections to Simplicity that are beyond the scope of this book. For example, the approach to semantics known as dynamic semantics denies that the semantic contents of individual sentences at contexts are propositions for reasons that are largely unrelated to the topics we pursue here. Hence this monograph is far from an exhaustive defence of Simplicity. (Note, though, that it is still open to certain of these alternative semantic frameworks to concede that traditional propositions are the objects of belief; hence their opposition to Simplicity may not turn out to be quite as thoroughgoing as may at first appear.)

In Chapter 2, we disarm many of these arguments by highlighting ways in which disquotational reports fail to provide evidence for inter-contextual content stability.

Even with the considerations of Chapters 2 and 3 absorbed, the reader may think there are just enough data to motivate relativism for some areas of discourse. Chapter 4 undertakes a detailed case study of one area where relativism appears particularly tempting—predicates of personal taste—and argues that, all things considered, the temptation should be resisted. We hope in that chapter to indicate various ways that the resources of contextualism have been underappreciated, and also to indicate data that are distinctly uncomfortable for the relativist. When properly examined, the case for relativism, even in the apparently fertile Protagorean hunting grounds of personal taste, turns out to be surprisingly poor. In short, Chapters 2 and 3 point to serious flaws in the theoretical underpinnings of relativism, and Chapter 4 points to serious inattention to subtleties and contours in the data for particular areas of discourse. Our hope is that Simplicity will emerge from these discussions largely unscathed.

2

Diagnostics for Shared Content: From 'Say' to 'Agree'

Two kinds of argument dominate the anti-Simplicity literature: the Operator Argument and a cluster of related arguments based on saying, agreement, and retraction data. This chapter is devoted to disentangling and evaluating this second cluster of arguments. We first sharply distinguish tests for content identity that deploy the verbs 'say' and 'believe' from agreement-based tests. The former, we argue, do not present a serious challenge to Simplicity. As a result, central steps in certain of the anti-Simplicity arguments outlined in Chapter 1 fail. That leaves the arguments against Simplicity based on agreement data. We have no silver bullet against such data; they can have significant evidential force, for reasons we make vivid. However, we can easily be misled by them, again for reasons we also make vivid. What is needed is a careful investigation of the relevant agreement data, on a case-by-case basis, in tandem with the claim that no Simplicity-friendly contents can account for whatever stable contents are revealed by it. We undertake such an investigation with respect to predicates of personal taste in Chapter 4, arguing that no strong case against Simplicity can be wrought from agreement and disagreement data in that domain. Moreover, and interestingly, agreement data can be used quite effectively *against* certain anti-Simplicity proposals. We illustrate this point in Chapter 3 by leveraging agreement data against a Kaplanian account of the relation between content and tense.

This chapter has two parts. In Part One we present and evaluate two versions of a saying-based content diagnostic. Part Two is devoted to agreement-based diagnostics for shared content.

Part One. Varieties of 'Say'-Based Content Diagnostics

SAYS-THAT AND EASINESS

Chapter 1 illustrated how Analytic relativists use reporting arguments to establish stability of content across contexts. They then argue that (i) this undermines the view that the sentences in question are semantically context sensitive, and (ii) that the stable content is so 'thin' that it fails to reach the level of propositionality.[1] This, in turn, is used as evidence against T1 and Simplicity more generally. The goal in this and the next few sections is to look more carefully at different possible versions of these reporting arguments. The first version we consider appeals to 'says-that' constructions:

> *Says-That*: Let u be an utterance of a sentence S by an agent A in context C. Suppose we can use S in some other context C′ to say what A said in C, i.e., suppose 'A said that S' is true when uttered in C′. If so, we have evidence that there is a level of content in S that is invariant with respect to the differences between C and C′, i.e., a level of content that is not sensitive to the difference between C and C′.[2]

Let us say that a sentence S exhibits *Easiness* if true disquotational says-that reports for S are easy to achieve across a wide range of environments. According to Says-That, the more Easiness you find with respect to S, the more evidence you have of its context *in*sensitivity. Proponents of

[1] We have no interest in being proprietorial about how 'proposition' and 'propositional' are to be used. In certain contexts, like this one, we use 'proposition' to imply 'capable of having Simplicity-friendly truth values', and our communicative purposes will be achieved so long as our audience understands that we are doing this in those contexts. Whether this involves a non-standard use of 'proposition' is a question that can probably be decided only once one has taken sides on the issues addressed in this work.

[2] What exactly do we mean by 'context'? It will suffice for the purposes of this principle to think of a context as a centred world—given by a world, time, place triple. For certain semantical purposes—e.g., accounts that speak of sentences as true at contexts where they are not uttered—this account of context will not suffice. (For example, a context for 'That is nice' will have to provide a designated referent, and a centred world will not automatically do this.) We shall not attempt to sort out a notion of context suitable to these latter purposes in these pages.

Says-That argue that, if it is hard to find *any* situation in which S cannot be disquotationally reported, that is strong evidence of the presence of some kind of stable semantic content.[3]

The underlying line of thought runs as follows.[4] If S exhibits a high degree of Easiness, then there is a content, p (which might or might not be propositional), that is said by all utterances of S (where p is the content expressed by S as it occurs in the complement clause of 'A said that S'). On one conception of semantics, this common core of content can be considered the semantic content of S.[5]

Proponents of this line of thought usually go on to point out that paradigmatic indexicals do not exemplify Easiness. Consider:

1. A: Nicole is here.
2. A: I married Nicole.
3. A: Nicole died yesterday.
4. B: A said that Nicole is here.
5. B: A said that I married Nicole.
6. B: A said that Nicole died yesterday.

It is not easy to make a true 'say-that' report along the lines of (4), (5), and (6). Certain special features of the environment have to be in place for the reporting speech to be correct; in the case of (4), the reporter has to be in the same place as the reportee,[6] in the case of (5) the reporter has to be identical to the reportee, and, in the case of (6), the reporter has to be speaking on the same day. These cases are supposed to illustrate how surprising it would be for a genuinely context-sensitive term to exhibit a high degree of Easiness.

[3] For simplicity of exposition, we ignore possible semantic context dependence that is due to time (at least in cases where time is not the central focus). It is, of course, true that no sentence of the form 'X is F' can be disquotationally reported in any context owing to the need to adjust for tense. Strictly speaking, an argument for the semantic stability of some adjective 'F' would proceed by adverting to the fact that disquotational reports of sentences involving 'F' can always be disquotational in the adjective position. We trust readers will not be distracted by the simplifying assumptions made in the text.

[4] Variations on this line of thought can be found in Cappelen and Lepore (2003, 2004), Hawthorne (2004), Richard (2004), Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson (2005), MacFarlane (2005*a*, 2007*b*), Stanley (2005).

[5] See, e.g., Soames (2002) and Cappelen and Lepore (2004) for such a conception of semantics.

[6] Obviously, the conditions for being in the same place will vary according to the size of the place picked out by the original speaker.

FROM EASINESS TO NON-PROPOSITIONAL SEMANTIC CONTENTS

As we saw in Chapter 1, a number of philosophers have attempted to use Easiness to extract surprising consequences. Consider the reports of (7)–(8) in (9)–(10):

7. A: Nicola might be dead.
8. A: Cremating the dead is disgusting.
9. B: A said that Nicola might be dead.
10. B: A said that cremating the dead is disgusting.

Reports like those in (9) and (10) seem easy to come by: no matter what the environment of the reporter is like, she has the ability to make a true 'say-that' report of A along the lines of B (at least ignoring slightly delicate issues about tense). We are invited to conclude that reports like those in (9)–(10) can be given of utterances of (7)–(8), *no matter how we vary the context of utterance and the context of the report*. This provides evidence that the predicate of personal taste 'disgusting' and the epistemic modal 'might' are semantically context insensitive. This is, to say the least, surprising.[7] Proponents of Says-That and Easiness now seem to be committed to semantic values that can be described as follows (with no prejudice about whether the 'that' clause introduces a truth-evaluable proposition):

9.1. *that Nicola might be dead*
10.1. *that cremating the dead is disgusting*

Other less philosophically interesting but still semantically significant cases include those in (11)–(16):

11. A: Nicola was really smart.
12. A: Naomi had had enough.
13. A: Jill was ready.
14. B: A said that Nicola was really smart.
15. B: A said that Naomi had had enough.
16. B: A said that Jill was ready.

[7] It is so especially for 'might'. Invariantism for 'disgusting', as used by all humans in all societies, will no doubt be tempting to some.

If one thinks that (11)–(13) exhibit a high degree of Easiness, one seems to be committed to semantic contents of the form:

11.1. *that Nicola was really smart*
12.1. *that Naomi has had enough*
13.1. *that Jill was ready*

There is something of a strain in accepting that each such thin semantic value cuts the space of possibility into the worlds where it is true and the worlds where it is not, grounded in felt uneasiness at answering very simple questions about what it would take for a thin semantic value to be true. (For example, would *Jill be ready* be true at a world where she was ready to play golf, but not ready to get marrried? Would the proposition *that Nicola was really smart* be true in a world where she is smart by the standards of Swedish short-order cooks, but not by the standards of Norwegian roughnecks? And so on.) It is immensely tempting to deny that these kinds of objects reach the level of propositionality.[8] John MacFarlane (2007*b*: 252) puts the point as follows (using 'minimal propositions' to refer to the kind of thin contents expressed by (12.1) and (13.1)):

> I believe that most philosophers' worries about minimal propositions are rooted in puzzlement over the question this claim naturally provokes: At which circumstances of evaluation is the proposition [*that Nicola is really smart*] true? Here I'm using the technical term 'circumstance of evaluation' the way David Kaplan taught us to use it in Demonstratives (1989). A circumstance of evaluation includes all the parameters to which propositional truth must be relativized for semantic purposes. Though Kaplan himself included times in his circumstances of evaluation (and contemplated other parameters as well), the current orthodoxy is that circumstances of evaluation are just possible worlds. In this setting, our question becomes: At which possible worlds is the minimal proposition true?[9] I'll call this the intension problem for minimal propositions

[8] Cappelen and Lepore (2004: ch. 11) argue that this temptation should be resisted. They argue that no plausible criteria of propositionality have been advanced that support this denial of propositionality. They also argue that the felt unclarity about the truth conditions of minimal propositions (beyond a disquotational statement of them) is largely unimportant, since the assertability of a sentence typically does not turn on whether its semantic value is true but rather on whether its communicated content(s) is (are) true. Since in this work we are less inclined to posit stable semantic values in the relevant cases, the issue largely does not arise for us, and so will not be addressed in what follows.

[9] The astute reader will notice that a relativist with a disquotational truth predicate cannot sneer too loudly about such questions of truth. If it is true for X that Nicola is really smart iff she has an IQ over 130, then it seems that X can, as a MacFarlane-style relativist, assert that the proposition that for any given world the proposition *that Nicola is smart* is true at that world iff she has an IQ over 130 in that world. We will return to this point in Chapter 4.

(using the term 'intension' for a function from possible worlds to truth values for propositions, or to extensions for properties and relations).

Having posited such semantic values, then, it is tempting to conclude that they are not propositional because they are non-specific, in Kaplan's sense, with respect to certain parameters.[10]

Note that, on some natural assumptions, this in turn forces a negative assessment of the thesis that truth-evaluable propositions are the objects of the attitudes (i.e., T2). For, assuming that the occurrences of 'that Nicola was really smart' in 'A believed that Nicola was really smart' and 'A said that Nicola was really smart' are not ambiguous, and that the latter relates a subject to a less-than-propositional content, then it is hard to deny that the belief ascription does so as well.[11] This moves us even further away from Simplicity.[12]

THREE WAYS OUT

When faced with these consequences of the Reporting Argument, we have three salient options:

- *Option 1*: Reject the inference from Easiness to context-insensitivity.[13]
- *Option 2*: Accept the test and on the basis of the data described above conclude that semantic contents are non-propositional. (Of course this leaves open certain decision points, including Disquotation and Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports, described in Chapter 1.)
- *Option 3*: Reject the assumption that thin semantic values are non-propositional. Some philosophers, e.g., Cappelen and Lepore, embark on the brave (some will think foolhardy) project of arguing

[10] Again, as mentioned in note 1 above, we use 'proposition' to imply 'having Simplicity-friendly truth conditions'. We do this without any prejudice against other ways of using the word 'proposition'.

[11] As is often noted, the fact that we can say things like 'A says and believes that Nicola is really smart' is strong evidence against an ambiguity thesis.

[12] To reinforce the rejection of T2 they may well note that, except where one suspects insincerity, one will happily embrace corresponding belief reports for any of the 'say-that' reports mentioned earlier.

[13] As we show below, it is possible to choose this option without rejecting Says-That as such.

> that there are truth-evaluable propositional context-invariant contents detected by Easiness phenomena. (One key resource for this strategy is to deny that what is asserted by, say, an utterance of 'Nicole might be dead' is given by the semantic value of that sentence; what I assert is not limited to and may not even include the semantic value of the sentence.)[14]

In what follows we pursue Option 1. We do that in order to block Option 2, and so Simplicity is left unimpugned. Moreover, there is no need to resort to Option 3 as a way of defending Simplicity, since it can be defended by appeal to far less controversial assumptions.

AGAINST EASINESS AS EVIDENCE FOR SEMANTIC INSENSITIVITY

To see that something is deeply wrong with the relevant application of Easiness, consider, as Hawthorne (2006) does,[15] what Easiness tells us about 'left' and 'nearby'.

17. A: Nicola turned left.
18. A: Naomi went to a nearby beach.
19. B: A said that Nicola turned left.
20. B: A said that Naomi went to a nearby beach.

It looks as though in (almost) any physical environment we have the ability to use (19) and (20) to report utterances of (17) and (18). In this way, Easiness obtains for 'left' and 'nearby', in contrast to a range of paradigm indexicals. (17) and (18) are constructions where Option 3 is particularly unpalatable—it is difficult to see how 'Nicola turned left' can express the same truth condition in a way that abstracts from the perspective that is operative for the speaker. We do not, however, think this provides significant evidence against a hypothesis of context-dependent semantic value in these cases. Here is why. A standard contextualism about 'left' will say that an utterance 'X turned left' will express a proposition of the form 'X turned left relative to orientation O', where context supplies a relevant orientation, and that 'Nicole went to a nearby beach' expresses a proposition of the form

[14] For more on this strategy, see Cappelen and Lepore (2004: chs. 10–13).
[15] See also Leslie (2007*b*).

'Nicole went to a beach nearby to L', where context supplies a relevant location. If the relevant orientation is the same, then there will be no problem in reporting (17) by uttering (19), and, if the relevant location is the same, there will be no problem in reporting (18) by uttering (20).

Now the key point to notice is that the relevant orientation governing a use of 'left' need not be the speaker's own orientation and the relevant location governing 'nearby' need not be the speaker's own location. After all, we can, for example, say 'Nicole turned left', where the acceptability of our assertion is dependent on whether Nicole turned left relative to her own orientation, and we can say 'Nicole went to a nearby bar', where the relevant location is, for example, some distant place we have been talking about earlier in the conversation. This is already a significant contrast between these terms and simple indexicals, where the physical environment of the speaker places severe constraints on the content of the indexical.

PARASITIC CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

Once the flexibility of 'left' and 'nearby' is noticed—and it is hard not to notice—it is fairly easy to explain Easiness. For, whatever one's location and orientation, one can use 'nearby' and 'left' in a way that is *parasitic* on features of the environment of the subjects that one is reporting on (or on features and situation that are salient to them). Thus, if you do not know where Nicole is but overhear her say 'I am going to a nearby bar', you can happily say 'Nicole said that she was going to a nearby bar': here the location supplied is parasitically determined by the location of Nicole. Similarly, even though you do not know which way Nicole is facing, you can report her as saying that she will turn left upon hearing 'I will turn left' and the orientation supplied by your context is parasitically determined by the location of Nicole.

The contextualist appeals to parasites to reconcile Easiness with context dependence.[16] Note that in so doing she need not object to

[16] This point was noted in Nunberg (1993) and emphasized in Humberstone (2006) and also in Cappelen and Lepore (2006). Thus, for example, Humberstone criticizes Cappelen and Lepore's use of disquotational reporting tests by pointing out the following feature of 'local' (and extending this to terms like 'tall' and 'smart'):

the Says-That test, properly interpreted. Here, as a reminder, is our formulation of the test:

> *Says-That*: Let u be an utterance of a sentence S by an agent A in context C. Suppose we can use S in some other context C′ to say what A said in C, i.e., suppose 'A said that S' is true when uttered in C′. If so, we have evidence that there is a level of content in S that is invariant with respect to the differences between C and C′, i.e., a level of content that is not sensitive to the difference between C and C′.

Note that we should not consider it an objection to this test that there is an indefinite number of contexts in which Sabrina's utterance of 'There was a battle here' can be reported by 'Sabrina said that there was a battle here'. All the actual and potential contexts in which Sabrina and the reporter are in the same place are ones where true indirect reports of the relevant kind are available. In so far as we are going to use Says-That to argue that the content of a sentence S is indifferent to variation along a certain parameter, we need to look at contexts that vary with respect to that parameter. What the parasitic phenomenon shows is that this might be hard to do. If an expression E is context sensitive with respect to feature F and E behaves parasitically in indirect reports, then the context of the report takes on the F-value of the context of the reportee—that is, E's parasitism has the result of making the two contexts merge their

Suppose that a mother in England wants to warn her daughter that the street food in Bombay, which the daughter is about to visit, is unsafe. She can do so, while both are still in England and travel plans are under discussion, by saying

(76) The local street food is not safe—please promise you'll stick to the hotel restaurant.

The daughter can write back after arrival:

(77) You were right—the local street food isn't safe, as I found to my cost last night.

And the mother can then report to others:

(78) My daughter confirmed that the local street food is indeed unsafe.

So the phrase 'the local street food' can be interpreted as 'the street food in the contextually salient location', where one way of making a location salient is by speaking (or writing from) there, but another is by reporting on what someone there has said: embedding this in indirect quotation does not hijack the salient location automatically to that of the reporter. (Humberstone 2006: 315–16)

F-values. As a result, it becomes quite hard to get yourself into a reporting context with an F-parameter different from that of the context of the reportee. Attempts to use Easiness to show that, for example, 'nearby' has a thin semantic content are, therefore, ultimately no more successful than attempts to show that 'I'm happy' has a uniform semantic content by confining one's attention to pairs of utterances by the same speaker.

These points extend straightforwardly to the other cases—once the parasitic potential in reporting is taken stock of, the ability of a reporter to transcend his own environment and standards to make correct 'say-that' reports is quite unsurprising. Thus, in particular, you can use 'fun' in a way that is tied to another individual's standards of taste and not to your own, and use 'might' in a way that is tied to another subject's body of information and not to your own. As soon as we recognize the possibility of parasitic use, it becomes clear that Easiness provides no significant evidence against contextualism. This does not undermine Says-That as such, but, with Easiness discredited, there is no obvious way to use Says-That effectively for anti-contextualist purposes.

BRIEF DIGRESSION: MORE ON EASINESS

Before moving on, we note two further points of interest about Easiness. First, we note that one has to be careful not to overstate the easiness of 'say-that' reports. Consider the following case.

> *Case One*: Suppose Sabrina hears a conversation in which Nicole says 'Bill Clinton is an enemy and Hillary Clinton is a friend'. Suppose, unbeknown to Sabrina, Nicole is a reporter who is describing the friends and enemies of a particular politician. Sabrina naturally hears Nicole as describing Nicole. Sabrina goes on to say to someone else 'Nicole said that Bill Clinton is an enemy and Hillary Clinton is a friend'.

Now Sabrina certainly *could* have made a guarded speech. She could have said:

> Nicole was talking the other day about someone, maybe herself, maybe someone else. She said that Bill Clinton is an enemy and Hillary Clinton is a friend.

The latter speech is intuitively true. But what of the speech that Sabrina made in an unguarded moment? Intuitions may be a bit wobbly here, but it is tempting to think that she actually expressed something false by 'Nicole said that Bill Clinton is an enemy and Hillary Clinton is a friend' in that context (namely that Nicole said that Bill is an enemy of hers and Hillary is a friend of hers).

Similar points arise for the other constructions we have been considering. Suppose, for example, that Nicole says 'I am going to a nearby hotel', and Sabrina hears her as talking about a hotel near to herself whereas in fact she is talking about a distant Caribbean location introduced earlier in the conversation. If Sabrina turns to someone and says 'Nicole said that she is going to a nearby hotel', it is not implausible to suppose that she has made a false speech.[17]

Note that, if you share these intuitions, that positively counts against a thin account of the contents of the relevant 'say-that' reports, since the latter would reckon the speech unimpugned by the relevant misinformation. We do not wish to take a stand here; for now, let us merely record the fact that some questions about the data are extremely delicate, and, on some fairly natural construals of those data, they actually tell quite strongly against a hypothesis of semantic uniformity.[18]

COLLECTIVE-SAYS-THAT (CST) AS AN IMPROVED DIAGNOSTIC

Those who wish to use 'say-that' reports as a basis for claims of semantic uniformity have proposed a way around the problems noted so far.[19]

[17] Assuming that is right, we should say that, while 'an enemy' can be used parasitically in a 'say-that' report, it does not have to be; and, in so far as it is not being so used, the disquotational report may well come out false.

[18] A final point about Easiness: the cases of 'left' and 'nearby' reveal that it would be absurd to use Easiness as a sufficient basis for a package that combines thin semantic values with Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports and Disquotation (as described in Chapter 1). After all, that package would yield strange and uncomfortable commitments for many constructions. Suppose, for example, X and Y are facing each other and a cat is between them. X says 'The cat will jump off the left end of the table'. Y says 'The cat will jump off the right end of the table'. In so doing they are agreeing with each other. If X is in a conversation with someone of his own orientation, the package would endorse the speech 'Y said something false' or 'What Y said is false'. But it is extremely hard to get oneself into a frame of mind where X's remark seems acceptable.

[19] See Cappelen and Lepore (2006) and Cappelen and Hawthorne (2007).

The basic idea is to block parasitic manoeuvres by reporting on a range of utterances at the same time, where differing values along the relevant parameter are operative across the utterances. In the cases of interest, a single use of a term functions to report simultaneously on a number of speeches in a felicitous way. If, as the contextualist supposes, the term has its semantic value fixed in the context of utterance, we are going to be pulled in different directions: for the that-clause to match the contents of the original speeches, the semantic value chosen for the that-clause has to match that of the speeches reported on; but, if there are multiple speeches with different semantic values for the term in question, and only *one* can figure in one's own that-clause, nothing will suffice. Since a parasite can feed on only one host at a time, the contextualist cannot explain the felicity of the collective report using the resources of the previous section.

The basic idea here should be obvious. Suppose a sentence is uttered in a range of contexts $C_1 - C_n$ and that one can report on the relevant speech acts with a single collective report. The conclusion recommended by this line of thought is that such a report would identify a content that is invariant across $C_1 - C_n$. If it turns out that there is such stable content across a sufficiently varied range of contexts of utterance of S, then, for reasons parallel to those given in connection with Says-That, it will be natural to think of it as the invariant semantic content of S. We can implement this strategy via the following principles, CST (for 'Collective-Says-That')-1–3:

> *CST-1*: Let u and u′ be utterances of S by A in C and by B in C′. If, from a third context C″, they cannot be reported by 'A and B said that S', S is semantically context sensitive.
>
> *CST-2*: Take two utterances, u and u′ by A and B of a sentence S in contexts C and C′. If they can be reported from a third context C″ by an utterance of 'A and B both said that S', then S is invariant with respect to C, C′, and C″ (or, at least, that is good evidence for such invariance).[20]

Then, generalizing:

> *CST-3*: Let a CR-triple for a sentence S be a triple consisting of two utterances u and u′ of S in distinct contexts C and C′, and

[20] Arguably, 'A said that P' can be true if A said a proposition that obviously entails P: this is one mundane reason why the test given is not watertight. See Cappelen and Lepore (1997*b*).

> one utterance of 'A and B said that S' in a third context C″. If, for all CR-triples involving S, the last member is true, then S is semantically invariant (or, at least, that is good evidence for its semantic invariance).[21]

The motivation for CST is the same as for Says-That. Sentences that satisfy CST-3 signal a common content across contexts and it is hard to reject the conclusion that this is the context-invariant semantic content of S (at least in some important sense of 'semantic').

CST threatens Simplicity for the same reason as Says-That does. Any of the examples we appealed to in previous sections (involving 'delicious', 'smart', 'ready', 'enough', and the epistemic 'might') could be used to illustrate this point, but we will leave those examples as an exercise for the reader and instead use 'It's raining' to exemplify the ease of collective reporting. Consider (23) as a report of (21) and (22):

21. A: It's raining.
22. B: It's raining.
23. C: A and B are saying that it's raining.

The sentence uttered in (23) is true. Not only is it true, but it looks as though the result generalizes across contexts. *Prima facie*, it seems you can vary the context of utterance for (21) and (22) without changing the truth value of C's utterance in (23). It looks as though we have the same result as before: highly surprising context-invariant semantic values. Note that, in this case, appeal to contextual parasites will not help us explain what is going on. Since there is no *one* context for the report to be parasitic on, the appeal to parasites will not help explain the truth of C's utterance in (23).

OBJECTION TO CST: LAMBDA ABSTRACTION IN COLLECTIVE REPORTS

To show what is wrong with this and related appeals to CST, we shall again look at the cases of 'left' and 'nearby', which, unlike some of the

[21] As before, we ignore issues connected to tense, trusting that the reader can correct for the relevant simplifying assumptions if he so wishes.

disputed constructions, have little attendant philosophical emotion and theoretical noise. Interestingly, 'left' and 'nearby' submit to collection patterns of the sort that interests us here:

24. A: Naomi went to a nearby beach.
25. B: Naomi went to a nearby beach.
26. C: A and B said that Naomi went to a nearby beach.
27. A: Naomi turned left.
28. B: Naomi turned left.
29. C: A and B said that Naomi turned left.

As we have noted already, Option 3—that of positing uniform propositional intensions (*à la* Cappelen and Lepore)—in these cases seems problematic. Thus, if these data constitute powerful evidence for semantic uniformity, we will be driven in a more relativistic (and, more generally, anti-Simplicity) direction. But do the data really provide a powerful motive for that kind of move?

We agree that the appeal to parasites in the previous section will not enable us to understand what is going on here. However, when properly understood, the data are not particularly revelatory and certainly do not provide suitable underpinnings for an anti-Simplicity approach to semantics. The data can be readily explained by the linguistic tools needed to explain the various readings of:

30. John loves his mother and Bill does, too.

Sentence (30) has two readings. On one reading—the one of interest here—'Bill does, too' means that Bill loves Bill's mother. The standard way to get this reading is to treat the verb phrase 'loves his mother' as of the form λx (x loves x's mother) (intuitively, the resulting reading is: 'John has the property of being an individual x such that x loves the mother of x and Bill has that property, too').[22] Using the same strategy, we can explain how we get a true reading of (30): we read the verb phrase as having the logical form of (31):

31. λx (x said that Naomi went to a beach $\text{nearby}_{(\text{to } x)}$)

[22] The point here is not new. For example, Stanley (2005) points out that lambda-abstracted readings make trouble for the collective 'say-that' test by paying particular attention to 'loves his mother' examples. For those unfamiliar with these moves, we recommend Heim and Kratzer (1998: ch. 9) and Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet (2000: ch. 7) as excellent introductions.

What (26) says, so understood, is that both A and B have the property of being an individual x such that x said that Naomi was going to a beach nearby to x.

Note that, so construed, the verb phrase in (26) distributes over A and B—that is, it is attributed to A and B individually. This gives us the reading that A said that Naomi went to a beach nearby to A and that B said that Naomi went to a beach nearby to B. Note also that, so understood, (26) is compatible with the view that 'There is a beach nearby' varies in content between contexts of utterance and so sits happily with the view that 'There is a beach nearby' is semantically context sensitive.

We conclude that the collection data (26) and (29) provide no evidence against the semantic context dependence of 'left' and 'nearby'. More generally, this kind of collection data provide no more evidence that 'said that' fails to express a relation between subjects and traditional propositions than the sentence 'John and Bill love their wives' provides evidence against the thesis that 'loves' expresses a relation between subjects and traditional objects of love.

GENERALIZATION: 'BELIEVES THAT', 'THINKS THAT', AND 'KNOWS THAT'

The strategy outlined above generalizes to collection data involving 'believes that', 'knows that', and 'thinks that'. Suppose A thinks that Naomi went to a beach nearby to A, and B thinks that Naomi went to a beach nearby to B. There is a reading of (32) and (33) that is perfectly felicitous:

32. A and B believe that Naomi went to a nearby beach.
33. A and B both think that Naomi went to a nearby beach.

Supposing further that A and B know what they are talking about, (34) is true:

34. A and B know that Naomi went to a nearby beach.

Lambda abstractions (32.1), (33.1), and (34.1) provide a natural explanation of what goes on in these cases.

32.1. A and B λx (x believes that Naomi went to a beach nearby$_{(\text{to x})}$)
33.1. A and B λx (x thinks that Naomi went to a beach nearby$_{(\text{to x})}$)
34.1. A and B λx (x knows that Naomi went to a beach nearby$_{(\text{to x})}$)

These accounts positively reinforce the view that, in such scenarios, the contents to which the believer is doxastically or knowingly related are specific with regard to location. Hence, unless this account of the data can somehow be combated—and we know of no good resistance programme ourselves—there is no prospect of using it to motivate objects of belief for which the first axiom of Simplicity (T1) fails.

FURTHER POINTS ABOUT LAMBDA-ABSTRACTED CONTENT

Some points are worth noting about our treatment of 'A and B said that Naomi went to a nearby beach'. First, we are open to a generalization of the proposal, where the underlying structure of 'A and B said that Naomi went to a nearby beach' is 'A and B λx (x said that Naomi went to a beach nearby$_{(\text{to fx})}$)', where 'f' in context picks out a function from individuals to locations (we ignore extra complexities introduced by time and modality).[23] The simplest assignment to that function variable is a function that takes each individual to the place where that individual is located—that would generate the reading described earlier. But there may be other assignments available. To see what we have in mind, consider the following case. Suppose A and B monitor the oceans by satellite from a spaceship. A sees C having trouble staying afloat in the water and B sees D having trouble. A does not panic because he thinks that there is help coming to C, and B has the same reaction to D's situation. In this setting the speech 'A and B didn't panic when they saw someone in trouble because A and B both thought there was help nearby' does not sound too bad. Here 'f' would be a function from individuals to the location they were attending to.

There are, however, limits on what kinds of values can be retrieved by listeners in a context. Three cases illustrate what we have in mind.

Case One

Suppose A utters 'Nicole is going to a nearby beach', meaning that Nicole is going to a beach nearby to where *Nicole* is. B utters 'Nicole is going to a nearby beach', meaning that Nicole is going to a beach nearby

[23] Manoeuvres of this sort are described in Stanley (2005: 51, n. 3).

to where *B* is. There is no doubt a gerrymandered function that would give a reading to the collective report. One could not reasonably expect a hearer to associate that function with the report. Hence, while the (expanded) formalism permits a true reading of the collective report, we would predict that it would be very hard indeed to hear a true reading of the collective report in the case we described. And, interestingly, informants seem to bear that out—in the situation where B is talking about what is nearby to himself but A is talking about what is nearby to Nicole, informants have a very hard time computing 'A and B said that Nicole went to a nearby beach'.

Case Two

We get a similar result in the following case, where one gathers together a pair of reports about reports:

> Tim: A said that there's a beach nearby [speaking of a location close to Tim].
>
> Jason: B said that there's a beach nearby [speaking of a location close to Jason].
>
> Didi: A and B said that there's a beach nearby.

It is hard to get Didi's utterance to sound true. This illustrates the same point as above: it is exceedingly difficult to get the value of the function in the lambda abstraction to take unusual values. In this case it would have to be a function that delivers the place where Tim is when A is the argument, and that delivers the place where Jason is when B is the argument. Given that Jason and Tim are not even mentioned in Didi's report, it is unsurprising that such a reading is not readily available. Meanwhile, those readings that are naturally available are ones that make Didi's report come out false.

Case Three

Someone can say 'X is an enemy' meaning X is an enemy of his. But one can also say 'X is an enemy' and mean that X is an enemy of some salient party Y (suppose, for example, we are describing Y's relations to his neighbours). Suppose A and B say 'X is an enemy', where A means X is an enemy of A and B means X is an enemy of B. In this situation, the collective report 'A and B said that X was an enemy' is entirely natural.

But suppose A, reporting on the affairs of C, said 'X is an enemy', meaning *that X is an enemy of C* and B said 'X is an enemy' meaning, as before, *that X is an enemy of B*. Here we find the collective report 'A and B said that X is an enemy' considerably less natural and certainly harder to hear than in the original case.[24]

To repeat, we are not insisting on a formalism that logically precludes a true reading of the collective report in these cases, but we have a compelling explanation of why a true reading is so much harder to hear (having to do with the unavailability of exotic functions in communication). What bears emphasis here is that those philosophers who would think that the complement clause has a very thin semantic value would not predict these data at all. They would expect the 'say-that' report to be heard as unproblematically correct in these situations. That it is not is considerable empirical evidence in favour of our preferred linguistic treatment.

BRIEF DIGRESSION: *DE SE* THOUGHT AND SIMPLICITY

In the second half of this chapter we develop a new diagnostic for shared content—one that we think is *Simplicity-friendly*. Before doing so, we want to address an issue that plays an important role in some arguments for relativism and that connects naturally to the kinds of diagnostics discussed above.

We have been glossing one relevant reading of 'A said/believes that Naomi went to a beach nearby' as tantamount to 'A said/believes that Naomi went to a beach nearby to A'. But this arguably does not fully capture the intuitive correctness conditions associated with the reading. For, suppose A thinks Naomi went to a beach nearby to George and that A is in fact identical to George but does not realize it. Then there seems to be a perfectly good reading of 'A believed that Naomi went to a beach nearby' according to which it is incorrect because, unaware who George is, A is unwilling to accept 'Naomi went to a beach nearby to me' or a suitable cognate. How do we remedy the

[24] Some informants find it unacceptable, others find it just about acceptable. One thing that may be going on here is that there is a 'mixed-quote' reading of the 'say-that' report, where part of the complement clause is mentioned but not used: they both said that X was 'an enemy'. Supposing such readings are available, the need to screen them off for certain purposes adds a further and quite considerable layer of complexity. For more on mixed quotation, see below.

lacuna? If we follow the path of David Lewis's famous 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*' (1979), the appropriate remedy will involve a departure from Simplicity. In that paper Lewis proposed that we capture what is distinctive about someone's thinking that a certain property belongs to himself—as opposed to a certain individual to whom (unbeknown to him) he happens to be identical—by construing belief as consisting fundamentally not in a relation to a proposition but in a relation to a property that is self-ascribed. On this view, when the tallest accountant in Alaska believes himself to be on fire, he self-ascribes the property of being on fire. When he believes the tallest accountant in Alaska to be on fire (without realizing he is the tallest accountant in Alaska), he self-ascribes the property of being in a world where the tallest accountant in Alaska is on fire, but does not self-ascribe the property of being on fire, or the property of being identical to the tallest accountant in Alaska. On this view, fundamental objects of belief are properties, not propositions, and so Simplicity is in jeopardy.[25,26]

Since the literature on so-called *de se* thought forms a vast corpus in itself, a full treatment of these issues would take us far beyond the scope of this work. Without pretending to offer any decisive verdict, we shall make five brief remarks about our own orientation on the issue.

(i) Taken at face value, belief and saying attributions look as though they describe relations between people and the complements of that-clauses. The latter do not seem to belong to the category of property-expressing constructions. The first challenge for proponents of the property-based account is to justify attributing such (apparently) bizarre logical forms to belief and saying reports.

(ii) The property-based approach does not square vary well with the natural and intuitive idea that the objects of thought are things that can figure as premisses and conclusions of reasoning. The propositional conception obviously fares much better in this regard.

(iii) Lewis also intends this story to handle what is distinctive about 'now' thoughts: these consist, most fundamentally, in a temporal stage of a person self-ascribing properties that put requirements

[25] See Egan (2007: 6–7).

[26] Obviously this move does not go all the way towards vindicating the full gamut of relativist ideas described in Chapter 1.

on what is simultaneous with that stage. But it is not clear how smoothly this story can be adapted to those who are unwilling to think of instantaneous objects as the fundamental *subjects* of belief.

(iv) One could imagine the Lewisian approach being motivated by certainly ordinary language uses of 'thinking the same thing' that, taken at face value, would appear to support its vision of the objects of thoughts. After all, the sequence

She thought she was going to get a big meal. He thought the same thing.

is felicitous in a context where the second subject's anticipation is self-directed. But this phenomenon does not point to anything special about the *de se*. For consider the following sequence:

When he went to Disneyland, he thought it was too commercial. When he went to Six Flags, he thought the same thing.

Here we see the same kind of flexibility of 'the same thing' but it has nothing to do with the *de se*. We doubt further whether anyone would be very tempted to use the last example as powerful evidence for non-standard objects of belief.[27]

(v) Most importantly, as we see things, the problem that the self-ascription account is designed to handle is a species of the more general problem raised by hyper-intensional aspects of intentional ascriptions, one for which the self-ascription story offers no general solution. Intuitively, typical thought and speech reports have felicity conditions that go beyond what is captured by any structured complex of objects, properties, quantifiers, and connectives of the sort that figures in mainstream formal semantics. Some examples come from 'I' and 'now' thoughts, but others do not: the claim that someone is thinking that Hesperus is Phosphorus seems to be a different claim from the claim that someone is thinking that Hesperus is Hesperus; the claim that someone is in pain is different from the claim that they have C-fibre stimulation (even supposing pain is C-fibre stimulation); and so on. Shifting to a framework where one thinks of belief as

[27] A pretty good first pass at what is going on in this example is that the second sentence involves ellipsis. It is short for 'When he went to Six Flags, he thought the same thing about it'.

fundamentally the self-ascription of properties does not provide the resources for handling such problems. For without some suitable account of how properties are to be fine-grained in a way that goes beyond their modal profile, we will be at a loss to explain why the act of self-ascribing the property of being in a world where Hesperus is Hesperus is not the act of self-ascribing the property of being in world where Hesperus is Phosphorus. Indeed, the shift from propositions to properties is no help whatsoever here. In the case of hyper-intensional puzzles such as this, the theorist has a choice. He can say that the relevant aspects of the felicity conditions are pragmatic and the truth conditions are given by the flat-footed account.[28] Or he can enrich the semantics in a way that enables the generated truth conditions to track those felicity conditions. There are various well-known approaches of this sort. The Fregean opts for a two-tiered sense-reference semantics. Others opt for a semantics that treats belief as a three-place relation between an agent, a proposition (of the standard variety), and a third *relatum* that plays the role of imposing a constraint on how that proposition is represented by the target agent. Others treat belief as a relation to an 'annotated tree', where the annotations play the role of imposing constraints of the sort just adverted to. (We do not pretend this taxonomy to be exhaustive.) What bears emphasis is that none of these accounts involves a significant departure from Simplicity. Sure enough, decisions as to whether and how various hyper-intensional elements enter into the semantics of attitude and speech-act reports is a delicate and important one. But, given that there is little evidence, in general, that such elements make for a departure from Simplicity, we think the onus is very much on the side of the self-ascription story to justify their departure on the basis of considerations to do with 'I' and 'now'.

In sum, while the Lewisian approach to the *de se* is not one of the challenges to Simplicity that we intend to address at length here, we

[28] As a springboard into this view, see Kripke (1979: 280–1, nn. 43 and 44), where he notices that a 'Shakespearean' account of proper names (according to which they can be substituted *salva veritate* in intensional contexts) delivers the result that we have known all along that Hesperus is Phosphorus. Kripke does not say how he wishes to deal with these 'muddy waters'. Scott Soames has embraced the Shakespearean account and offered a pragmatic story about the relevant felicity intuitions (see Soames 2002).

doubt very much that Simplicity will be refuted by considerations of that sort.

Part Two. 'Agree'-Based Content Diagnostics

THREE AGREEMENT-BASED TESTS FOR CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

In the remainder of this chapter we present new diagnostics for sameness and difference of content. These are diagnostics that depart from the tradition that focuses on uses of the verb construction 'say that' (and, sometimes, 'believes that') as the source of evidence. As an alternative, we propose to give centre stage to the verbs 'agree' and 'disagree'. We do not claim that our new diagnostics are problem-free—for reasons that we spell out, it does not give us a test that can be mechanically applied to deliver canonical verdicts. Nevertheless, it often does provide a route to evidentially weighty data, and we accordingly attempt to put the diagnostics to use in subsequent chapters. Here are some principles we have in mind (reasons for certain aspects of the formulations will emerge in due course).

- *Agree-1*: Let u be a sincere utterance of S by A in C and u′ a sincere utterance of 'not-S' by B in C′. If from a third context C″ they cannot be correctly reported by 'A and B disagree whether S', then S is semantically context sensitive. Meanwhile, if from a third context C″ they can be correctly reported by 'A and B disagree whether S', that is evidence that S is semantically invariant across C, C′, and C″.
- *Agree-2*: Take two sincere utterances u and u′ by A and B of a sentence S in contexts C and C′. If from a third context C″ they can be reported by an utterance of 'A and B agree that S', then that is evidence that S is semantically invariant across C, C′, and C″. Meanwhile, if the report in C″ is incorrect, that is evidence that S is not semantically invariant across C, C′, and C″.
- *Agree-3*: Let an A-Triple for a sentence S be a triple consisting of two sincere utterances u and u′ of S by A and B respectively in distinct contexts C and C′, and one utterance of 'A and B agree that S' in a third context C″. If, for *all* A-triples involving S, the

last member is true, then that is evidence that S is semantically invariant.[29]

Let us start by looking at how these principles fare with the kinds of cases that created trouble for Easiness and CST. Consider (35) as a report of (24) and (25) and (36) as a report of (27) and (28):

35. A and B agree that Naomi went to a nearby beach.
36. A and B agree that Naomi turned left.

Both are obviously false, which by Agree-1 provides evidence that 'Naomi went to a nearby beach' and 'Naomi turned left' are not invariant across the reporting context and the pair of reported contexts.

Consider similarly a case where A and B face each other and A says (thinking of his left) 'The ball went off the left end of the table' and B says (thinking of his left) 'The ball did not go off the left end of the table'. If C were to report this by saying 'A and B disagree about whether the ball went off the left end of the table', it would obviously be incorrect, which by Agree-1 provides evidence of the semantic context dependence.

We saw earlier how Easiness has been used to support anti-contextualist conclusions with respect to apparently context-sensitive terms such as 'smart', 'ready', and 'enough'. Yet we have found reason to distrust appeals to 'say-that' data to establish such conclusions. What bears emphasis here is that agreement and disagreement data militate in favour of the opposite conclusion. Consider the following cases:

Case One: A sincerely utters 'Nicola is smart. She stands way back against strong servers' as a comment solely on her tennis skills; B sincerely utters 'Nicola is not smart. She invested all her money in penny stocks' as a comment solely on her business acumen. The report 'A and B disagree about whether Nicola is smart' is intuitively incorrect.

Case Two: A sincerely utters 'Nicola is ready. She has her coat on, so we can leave now' and B says 'Nicola is not ready. She hasn't studied enough to take the exam tomorrow'. The report 'A and B disagree about whether Nicola is ready' is intuitively incorrect.

[29] Here, again, we simplify somewhat by ignoring issues of tense. In so far as tense automatically introduces context dependence, one does best to restrict oneself to simultaneous utterance when testing for context dependence.

> *Case Three*: A sincerely utters 'Nicola has had enough. She is going to dump her husband' and B says 'Nicola has not had enough. Let her have the last slice of the cake'. The report 'A and B disagree about whether Nicola has had enough' is intuitively incorrect.

In so far as we trust these results, we do not face the trouble of finding a stable semantic value for 'Nicola is smart' that either embraces Cappelen and Lepore's controversial minimal propositions or else, instead, fails to square with Simplicity.

Note that the goal of this chapter is to present, explain, and defend the superiority of Agree (the conjunction of Agree-1, Agree-2, and Agree-3) over the various other reporting tests appealed to by Analytic relativists (and many others besides). We do not, in this chapter, engage in a discussion of what results it yields in the interesting cases such as predicates of taste, epistemic modals, tense, modality, and knowledge, though we shall be putting the tests to use in Chapters 3 and 4.

The remainder of this chapter has five parts. First, we present a hypothesis about why Agree works better than Says-That and CST. Second, we show how noise from mixed quotation constitutes trouble for Says-That and CST, but is silenced when using Agree. Third, we distinguish two notions of agreement (agreement as a *state* and agreement as an *activity*). Fourth, we consider some complications. Fifth, we end with a reply to some objections raised by a leading Analytic relativist, John MacFarlane, against Agree and related tests.

DIAGNOSIS: WHY THE AGREEMENT TEST WORKS

Remember how we explained the acceptability of (26) ('A and B said that Naomi went to a nearby beach') and (29) ('A and B said that Naomi turned left'): lambda abstraction gives us a true reading of the collective report, even in cases where the sentence in question contains an obviously context-sensitive term. For interesting reasons, lambda abstraction will not give us a true reading when the sentence in question contains 'agree'. The reason is that it is hard to hear a reading of 'agree' reports according to which 'agree' distributes over the individuals in question. In this respect, 'agree' is like 'scatter', 'disperse', and 'share'. 'Agree' forms part of a plural predicate, one where lambda abstraction merely gives us readings like (37):

37. A and B λxs (xs agree that Naomi went to a beach local$_{(\text{to xs})}$)

We *can* attribute the property expressed by the predicate to the plurality of A and B, but, so read, (37) requires each of A and B to have the view that Naomi went to a beach local to both A and B. 'Agree', being non-distributive, requires us to find a content common to A and B, in a way that collections using 'say that', for example, do not.

It is worth noting that some other verbs seem to have the same property. Consider (38):

38. A and B debated whether a local celebrity was a good actor.

Again, it looks as though this cannot be true if A was in New Jersey talking about a celebrity in New Jersey, and B was in Oxford talking about a celebrity local to Oxford. Debating is something they do jointly; hence the collection requires a unified semantic value for 'local'. (It is, however, harder to use 'debate' to construct a useful test for semantic context sensitivity of single terms, since debates do not consist of single sentences. People debate by uttering large chunks of discourse and that makes the verb less useful for semantic purposes.)

We want to acknowledge right away that there are certain special contexts in which distributive readings of all the verbs we have mentioned are possible. Take 'shared'. The normal and natural reading of 'A and B shared a pizza' is one according to which they shared a pizza with each other. But suppose we ask 'What did A and B each do with their dates that evening?' We can in this special setting hear 'They shared a pizza' as true. Similarly, suppose A and B are both involved in debating competitions in their respective home towns. Then we can hear (38) as involving a covert 'with the people in their debating competitions' and 'debated' as distributing over a pair of pluralities. But in settings where there are no salient sets of pluralities in view, a non-distributive reading of 'share', 'debate', and 'agree' is overwhelmingly natural. In practice, then, this complication is unlikely to threaten the smooth running of agreement-based shared-content diagnostics.

AN ADDITIONAL ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF AGREEMENT: MIXED QUOTATION

In this section we note one further advantage of relying on agreement-based diagnostics for shared content as opposed to 'say-that' diagnostics:

the phenomenon of mixed quotation makes difficulties for disquotational reporting tests that rely on saying, but does not generate the same concerns about agreement-based reporting tests.

First, some background. Mixed quotation is a form of quotation that mixes indirect and direct quotation: part of the sentence is quoted and part is not quoted, as in (39):

39. Quine said that quotation has 'a certain anomalous feature'.

It has often been noticed that indexicals and other context-sensitive terms can be mixed quoted, as in (40)–(43):[30]

40. Their accord on this issue, he said, has proved 'quite a surprise to both of us'.
41. Charles Grant said in an open letter to Mr Bush that 'your best potential allies are the Europeans' and it was time to make up with them.[31]
42. Bush also said his administration would 'achieve our objectives' in Iraq.[32]
43. He now plans to make a new, more powerful absinthe that he says will have 'a more elegant, refined taste than the one I'm making now'.[33]

What these cases show, conclusively, is that the content of mixed quotation containing an indexical cannot be recovered simply by removing the quotation marks. It might seem plausible that one proposition communicated by an utterance of (39) is *that Quine said that quotation has a certain anomalous feature*. But in the case of, say, (43), it is clearly not part of what is communicated *that he now plans to make a new, more powerful absinthe that will have a more elegant, refined taste than the one I am making now*.

Here is why mixed quotation should worry those appealing to disquotational saying reports: these tests require that the same sentence be used in the complement clause of the report and in the reported utterance. But if we are bad at distinguishing between, for example, (44) and (45)

44. John said that there's a good Thai restaurant 'nearby'.
45. John said that there's a good Thai restaurant nearby.

[30] These examples are from Cappelen and Lepore (1997*a*) and Cumming (2003).
[31] *New York Times*, 3 Nov. 2004.
[32] *New York Times*, 4 Nov. 2004.
[33] Ibid.

as a report of 'There's a good Thai restaurant nearby', then we are bad at telling whether the test really has been implemented. There is always the lingering doubt in the controversial cases whether we are really dealing with a mixed quotation, and hence have failed to give a disquotational indirect report. Hawthorne (2006: 446) concludes, on the basis of such worries, that a 'say-that'-based diagnostic is 'a terrible test for context dependence, unless we can screen off "mixed quote" readings'.[34]

There are several reasons why it is not easy to screen off mixed-quote readings. First, note that one cannot always test for the presence or absence of mixed quotation in an ordinary report by simply checking to see whether quotation marks literally appear. If the report is spoken rather than written down, this test obviously cannot be implemented. Even if it is written down, it is far from clear that those who ordinarily write down 'say-that' reports are careful actually to insert quotation marks when mixed quotation is at work. For example, it would not be surprising to see the following claim written down without quotation marks:

> A and B both said that they are gay, but they meant very different things by that.

If A meant 'happy' and B 'homosexual', it is natural to read the above as making mixed quote use of 'gay'. Claims akin to the above often appear without quotation marks.

Since our current selves are not in the business here of using 'say-that' diagnostics for shared content, we need not worry too much about the above problem.[35] What about agreement reports? Fortunately the mixed-quotation use seems far less in order in that case. After all, claims like

> A and B agree that they are gay, but mean very different things by that

and

> A and B agree that it is a bank, but one thinks it is a river bank and the other a financial institution

[34] Note that one natural solution is to let the 'say-that' report and the target utterance be in different languages, though one can still try to make trouble using 'translational mixed quotation'. See Cappelen and Lepore (2007: ch. 5).

[35] Though we think it should be a concern to Stanley (2005), Richard (2004), MacFarlane (2005), Hawthorne (2004), Egan, Hawthorne, and Weatherson (2005), and Cappelen and Lepore (2004), who advocate various versions of saying reports.

do not seem felicitous—at best we hear them as a kind of joke. In short, the need to screen off mixed quotation is far less pressing when it comes to agreement-based diagnostics for shared content, since 'agree' does not generate an environment that is very tolerant of mixed quotation.

A CLARIFICATION: AGREEMENT AS STATE VERSUS AGREEMENT AS ACTIVITY

The verb 'agree' has a use according to which it picks out a *state* of some plurality of individuals—where some individuals agree that P if they all believe the proposition that P. There is also a different use according to which it denotes an activity, where agreeing that P is the endpoint of a debate, argument, discussion, or negotiation. On this use, 'agreeing that P' marks an event. The latter use, though not the former, takes a progressive use, 'They are agreeing that X is the thing to do'. The latter use, though not the former, is in play in the 'agree-to' construction. The latter use is interactive: it requires that the agents who agree or disagree interact in some way (though it could be by B's reading A's letter—they do not need to be face-to-face). However, the former use is perfectly applicable to interaction-free pairs of individuals so long as there is some view about the world that they share.

Note that the second use of 'agree' does not require that the subjects believe the proposition in question. Consider the following exchange:

A: P.

B: I agree.

Even if B believes that not-P, there is a sense in which she agreed with A simply by uttering 'I agree'. Here we could intelligibly ask B: 'Why did you agree with A, when you believe that not-P?' (Similarly *mutatis mutandis* for 'I disagree'.) Note, relatedly, that in this sense one can agree to something without realizing what one is agreeing to. Suppose you sign a document, without reading it through. With 'I agree. NN', you have in an important (and often legally binding way) agreed with its content. The case also illustrates that, just as a very standard way of promising is actually to use the verb 'promise', so a very standard way of agreeing is actually to use the verb 'agree'. (These are what we may call the *performative uses* of 'agree'.)

Both uses of 'agree' have the non-distributional character described in the previous section. Thus, for example, whichever use of 'agree' is in play, the lambda-abstraction reading is unavailable for 'They agreed that Nicole was at a nearby hotel'. No doubt, then, either use of 'agree' would function better as a diagnostic of shared and divergent contents than Says-That. For our part, though, we have chosen to focus primarily on the first—stative—use of 'agree'. Unless noted otherwise, the reader can presume that it is this use in play in the discussions to come.[36]

COMPLICATIONS FOR 'AGREE'

We were somewhat guarded in our formulations of the diagnostics. If one can truly say 'A and B agree that S' in a case where A sincerely asserts S and B sincerely asserts S, we guardedly described this as evidence of semantic uniformity of S across the reporter's and reportee's contexts. Why not say something stronger?

One reason is fairly obvious. Suppose some sentence S means P in the reporter's mouth and that it means something different when uttered by A and B. Still, it may happen to be that A and B share the belief that P and that this makes for the truth of the report 'They agree that S' (though not one that is grounded by the original speeches). One can obviously screen off cases like this by asking oneself whether the original sincere utterances of S suffice to ground the truth of the agreement report.[37]

But there are more subtle complications. Suppose A and B both utter S (or are disposed to utter S). In so doing A asserts (or would assert) P1 and B asserts (or would assert) P2. Suppose further that both P1 and

[36] Note that this is why 'sincere' appears in our agreement-based diagnostics. If it were the second use of 'agree' in play, then no such proviso would be called for, since, as just noted, agreement in that sense does not require shared belief.

[37] One subtlety is that typically an agreement report is grounded partly in sincere speeches, partly in additional assumptions about propositional attitudes. First, suppose A utters 'It is raining in Paris' at t1, and that B utters 'It is raining in Paris' at t2, which is a slightly later time. Even supposing that each utter slightly different semantic contents—owing to their being about different times—it may well be natural for an observer to report confidently at t3 (slightly after t2) 'A and B agree that it is raining in Paris'. The natural account of what is going on here is that the reporter is relying not merely on the speeches but on an assumption—which may be natural in context—that the speakers have not formed the view that it has stopped raining in Paris between the times of their utterances and t3. This is another place where we abstract from issues of tense for simplicity's sake. (Thanks to Stewart Cohen for discussion on this point.)

P2 imply a third proposition, P. Now suppose that S in the reporter's mouth expresses the proposition P. Then the truth of 'A and B agree that S' can be supported by the original speeches, even though their propositional content is different. Note that, in the special case where A asserts a proposition that entails the one asserted by B, the report will often come out correct if the complement clause of the report expresses the weaker of the pair of propositions.

Let us briefly look at one kind of case where the wrinkle we have noticed may be particularly pertinent. Suppose a reporter is observing two people, Joe Coach and Joe Normal. Joe Coach is a basketball coach who is reluctant to apply 'tall' to people, and indeed predicates 'tall' of someone only when that person is over 6 feet 8 inches tall. Joe Normal occupies a more mundane environment and happily applies 'tall' to anyone over 6 feet tall. It will not seem very natural for the observer to claim that Joe Coach and Joe Normal disagree about whether a person who is 6 feet 4 inches is tall. But it will seem quite natural to claim that Joe Coach and Joe Normal both agree that a person who is 7 feet tall is tall.[38,39]

Here's a tentative diagnosis of what is going on: in trying to describe Joe Coach and Joe Normal simultaneously, the reporter uses 'tall' in a way that is deferential to the joint context of the two reportees. In effect, he uses 'tall' in a way governed by the following rules for tall_j:

- 'tall_j' is true of someone if 'tall' as used by Joe Coach is true of that person and 'tall' as used by Joe Normal is also true of that person.
- 'tall_j' is false of someone if 'tall' as used by Joe Coach is false of that person and 'tall' as used by Joe Normal is also false of that person.

'tall_j' is then left unspecified (vague) in its truth conditions for cases that are not covered by either clause. In this way, 'tall_j' is the child of the joint operation of the pair of linguistic environments inhabited by Joe Coach and Joe Normal.[40] On this fairly natural construal of what is

[38] We find such a claim particularly natural for the non-stative 'agree': for the purpose of this particular example, hear 'agree' as being used in that way.

[39] Another example: Jason gets a medium-sized T-bone steak, and says 'That's a lot'. A talking lion gets the same steak, and, disappointed, says 'That's not a lot'. Few have the sense that Jason and the lion are in disagreement. Still, we are willing to say 'They can agree that an entire elephant carcass is a lot of meat'. In general, it is easy to generalize this phenomenon to cases where two parties are operating with a single scale, use a predicate to mark different thresholds, but where a target object surpasses both thresholds.

[40] Note that such a predicate is not merely useful in describing a pair of speakers from the outside. It may be useful for the coordination of action. Suppose Joe Normal and Joe Coach try to discuss what to do having received the instruction 'Give vitamin C to all

going on, the data are unsurprising: on the one hand, Joe Normal and Joe Coach could agree that a person who is 7 feet tall is tall_j. On the other hand, it is not acceptable to say that Joe Normal and Joe Coach disagree about whether a person who is 6 feet 4 inches tall is tall_j, since that is a case where the extension is deliberately treated as altogether vague.[41]

Because of such cases we conclude that, while the unavailability of a true reading of 'They agree that S' is a tell-tale sign of context dependence for 'S' when faced with two sincere utterances of S, the availability of a true reading of 'They agreed that S' in a case where two subjects sincerely assert 'S' is by no means a surefire sign that 'S' had the same semantic value in the mouth of each subject.

AN OBJECTION: MACFARLANE ON AGREEMENT AND OTHERWORLDLY INDIVIDUALS

A leading Analytic relativist, John MacFarlane, argues that the simple view of agreement outlined above fails. He even uses that alleged failure to support his version of relativism. According to MacFarlane, a pair of people from different worlds can believe the same content and not plausibly be thought of as agreeing. Furthermore, they can believe P and not-P, respectively, and not be disagreeing. Here is how the argument goes:

> Consider Jane (who inhabits this world, the actual world) and June, her counterpart in another possible world. Jane asserts that Mars has two moons, and June denies this very proposition. Do they disagree? Not in any real way. Jane's assertion concerns our world, while June's concerns hers. If June lives in a world where Mars has three moons, her denial may be just as correct as Jane's assertion. (MacFarlane 2007*a*: 20)

Thus, the natural picture of agreement we have endorsed above, according to which agreement between a pair of individuals fundamentally consists in their acceptance of the same proposition, is called into question.

the tall people' when they do not know the context in which the instruction is written. They may use something like tall_j as the basis for various joint resolutions: 'Well, we can agree that the seven-foot-tall guys are tall and that we should give vitamin C to them.'

[41] Here is another candidate diagnosis of what is going on in such cases: in some contexts it is harmless to adopt the pretence that there is a single context-invariant standard for tall and the relevant agreement reports are fuelled by a pretence of that sort.

Reply to MacFarlane

Here is what has gone wrong in the above argument: the claim that each of two individuals in different worlds accepts some proposition P is not akin to the claim that two individuals in different countries accept that proposition. The latter claim entails that there are two individuals who accept the proposition that P. But, even if we unrestrict our quantifiers as far as possible, the former claim does not entail that there are two individuals that accept P. After all, on the most standard metaphysical picture, there is no use of 'everything' so unrestricted that 'everything that exists actually exists' comes out false. To say that there is some world at which an individual accepts P merely requires that it could be the case that some individual accepts P. And, supposing that the relevant individual actually exists, the fact that he accepts P at some world entitles us only to the conclusion that he might accept P. Thus, possible world scenarios of the sort that MacFarlane entertains do not provide examples where a pair of individuals accept some content P but nevertheless fail to agree that P, or examples where a pair of individuals accept P and not-P respectively but nevertheless fail to disagree that P.[42]

MacFarlane anticipates something like this reply. To counter it, he claims to be able to preserve the spirit of his original objection without appeal to otherworldly individuals:

> Nothing hinges here on the realist talk of worlds and counterparts. However you think of modality, it makes sense to ask whether in saying what one *would have* said, in some counterfactual situation, one would have disagreed with what one actually *did* say. That you would have rejected the proposition you actually accepted is not sufficient for an affirmative answer to this question. (MacFarlane 2007*a*: 23; emphases in original)

Note first that MacFarlane is resorting to a derivative use of 'disagree' according to which one disagrees with *what was (or would have been) said*—that is, a view, as opposed to a person. To see where he goes wrong, it is useful first to get clear on why he needs to move away from disagreement between persons. Suppose Bill thinks that Jim is happy,

[42] Of course, matters get a little more complicated if we opt for the modal realism of David Lewis. But note that in that setting, in so far as I say something true by 'There are no talking donkeys', I restrict my quantifier in a different way from my counterparts in talking-donkey worlds, and so our sentences have different semantic values.

but that, if Betsy had left Jim, Frank would have thought (correctly) that Jim was unhappy. We *cannot* reasonably claim (C):

> C. Bill thinks that Jim is happy. If Betsy had left Jim, then Frank would have disagreed with Bill.

This is because, on the natural understanding (one underscored by standard modal treatments), (C) is the claim (using now the language of worlds simply as a heuristic) that at the relevant worlds w where Betsy leaves Jim, Frank disagrees with Bill *at w*. But the fact that Bill *actually* thinks that Jim is happy in itself provides no good reason for thinking that this is so.

However, MacFarlane's objection fares no better when the focus is on disagreement, not between persons, but with what someone said (or would have said). We start by making explicit what we take to be a natural view (one we take to follow from Simplicity and Agree (combined with some obvious additional assumptions)):

> *DIS*: Suppose that A sincerely utters S and that the content of that utterance is P. Suppose further that if Q were the case, B would have sincerely uttered not-S and the content of that utterance would have been not-P. On those assumptions, it follows that if Q were the case, B would have disagreed with what A actually said.

MacFarlane encourages us to deny DIS. To see how problematic this is, we return to MacFarlane's example involving Jane, June, and Mars. Here is a way to think of the relevant situation:

> What Jane actually says is *that Mars has two moons*, and she does so by uttering 'Mars has two moons'. If it were the case that Mars had only one moon, June (who is Jane's counterpart) would have endorsed the proposition *that it is not the case that Mars has two moons*, and she would have done so by sincerely uttering the sentence 'It is not the case that Mars has two moons'.

Now ask yourself: if June under the imagined circumstances were to endorse the proposition *that it is not the case that Mars has two moons*, would she be in disagreement with what Jane actually said? Well, what Jane actually said is *that Mars has two moons*. So it seems to us entirely obvious that the answer is 'yes'. If June were to endorse the proposition *that it is not the case that Mars has two moons*, she is in disagreement with the proposition *that Mars has two moons*.

For further evidence, consider again the case of Frank, Jim, and Betsy. The following claim sounds perfectly felicitous to our ears:

> *DIS-1*: Bill said *that Jim is happy*. If Betsy had left Jim, then Frank would have sincerely uttered the sentence 'It is not the case that Jim is happy' and so endorsed the proposition *that it is not the case that Jim is happy*. In so doing, Bill would have disagreed with the view actually endorsed by Bill.[43]

We conclude that MacFarlane's attempt to make trouble for natural ideas about the connection between content diversity and disagreement, once purged of its dependence on modal realism, relies on the putative falsity of DIS, DIS-1, and related examples. Since these are manifestly not false, his argument points to nothing that need trouble advocates of Simplicity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have argued that one gets more secure data for sameness and difference of content by using 'agree' and 'disagree' than one does using 'say that' and 'believe that', and we shall take heed of this in the remaining discussion.[44] Of course, even with this chapter properly absorbed, arguments for stability and diversity of content are not going to be failsafe. For one thing, in so far as we are sometimes blind to

[43] What about the construction 'I would have disagreed with my actual self'? Note first that this construction is a little anomalous, in that it does not seem to behave in a compositional way: the sentence 'She would have disagreed with my actual self' is at best borderline English. We thus think one should be very wary of placing the argumentative burden on this construction. There is, moreover, a very natural account of this construction in terms of the materials in the text, one that then provides no encouragement whatsoever for MacFarlane: 'I wouldn't have resembled my actual self' is a slightly idiomatic way of saying 'I wouldn't have been a way that resembles the way I actually am'; 'I wouldn't have agreed with my actual self' is a slightly idiomatic way of saying 'I wouldn't have agreed with the view that my actual self takes'. (Similar remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to 'my current self'.) Thanks to Elia Zardini for useful discussion on this point.

[44] Note that, apart from questions of semantic value, one might look for diagnostics for shared objects of belief and shared objects of assertion across various contexts. Even those who are sceptical about our conception of semantic value may embrace the thesis, implicit in the above discussion, that 'say-that' diagnostics for shared objects of belief and assertion are much poorer than agreement-based diagnostics. (Versions of the latter diagnostics could, indeed, be formulated that bypass the notion of semantic value, but we shall not explore alternative formulations here.)

differences in semantic content, we will be prone to misapply the tests. The agreement diagnostics thus do not protect us from misjudgements of sameness and differences of content, since faulty judgements about such sameness and difference will issue in faulty judgements about which agreement and disagreement reports are correct. That said, the tests do give correct results when properly applied, and, as we shall see, some real mileage can be achieved by these tests. By contrast, attempts to reject Simplicity based on Says-That and Easiness diagnostics alone are unlikely to succeed.

3

Operators, the Anaphoric 'That', and Temporally Neutral Propositions

This chapter has four parts, the first of which is by far the most elaborate:

- In Section 1, we present and reject a Kaplanian argument against Simplicity, the so-called Operator Argument.
- In Section 2, we present and reject an argument against Simplicity based on the anaphoric 'that'.
- In Section 3, we briefly elaborate on Contingency and Temporality (mentioned in Chapter 1) in the light of earlier discussions.
- We end, in Section 4, with some direct evidence against the positive view endorsed by Kaplan (and, e.g., Lewis, Dummett, MacFarlane, and Stanley)—evidence based on the Agreement diagnostic developed in Chapter 2.

The chapter has two main take-home lessons. First, Kaplanian operator arguments against Simplicity typically rely on dubious and unmotivated semantic and syntactic assumptions. Second, there is a strong case against the approach to temporality that is introduced by Kaplan and that forms one of the key motivating threads of contemporary anti-Simplicity semantics. This is especially pertinent to Analytic relativists, who frequently draw inspiration and dialectical leverage from this aspect of the Kaplanian tradition.

LEWIS AND KAPLAN ON OPERATORS

David Lewis (1998) wrote:

> Often the truth (-in-English) of a sentence in a context depends on the truth of some related sentence when some feature of the original context is shifted. 'There have been dogs.' is true now iff 'There are dogs.' is true at some time

before now. 'Somewhere the sun is shining.' is true here iff 'The sun is shining.' is true somewhere. 'Aunts must be women.' is true at our world iff 'Aunts are women.' is true at all worlds. 'Strictly speaking, France is not hexagonal.' is true even under low standards of precision iff 'France is not hexagonal.' is true under stricter standards. (p. 27)

Lewis thinks this undermines Simplicity:

It would be a convenience, nothing more, if we could take the propositional content of a sentence in context as its semantic value. But we cannot. The propositional content of sentences do not obey the compositional principle, therefore they are not semantic values. Such are the ways of shiftiness that the propositional contents of 'Somewhere the sun is shining' in context *c* is not determined by the content in *c* of the constituent sentence 'The sun is shining.'. For an adequate treatment of shiftiness we need not just world-dependence but index-dependence—dependence of truth on all the shiftable features of context. (p. 39)

David Kaplan (1989) wrote:

Technically, we must note that intensional operators must, if they are not to be vacuous, operate on contents which are neutral with respect to features of circumstance the operator is interested in. Thus, for example, if we take the content of S to be (i) [the proposition that David Kaplan is writing at 10 a.m. on 26 March 1977], the application of a temporal operator to such a content would have no effect; the operator would be vacuous. (pp. 503–4, n. 28)

This functional notion of the content of a sentence in a context may not, because of the neutrality of content with respect to time and place, say, exactly correspond to the classical conception of a proposition. (p. 504)

Lewis explicitly rejects the semantic framework of Simplicity. Kaplan is a little more cautious—notice his use of 'may'—but he does, at least in the passages above, suggest that considerations to do with operators make trouble for the conception of propositions defended by Simplicity. The reasons offered against Simplicity share a common theme. If the aim of the game is compositional semantics, then we cannot assign propositions to sentences on pain of losing a compositional account of the sundry ways that they combine with other expressions to form more complex sentences.

In what follows we shall offer a rational reconstruction of the case against Simplicity implicit in Kaplan's work (one that, in turn, forms the backdrop to Lewis's work) and then criticize it.[1] In compressed form,

[1] We acknowledge that the argument we present is closer to Kaplan's text than to Lewis's. We are unable to see any interestingly new case against Simplicity in Lewis and

our central objections are these. First, the case against Simplicity relies on a uniformity assumption—that certain strings of words have the same kind of semantic value when they combine with various expressions (for example, temporal, modal, locational, and precisional expressions) as when they occur in isolation. This uniformity assumption is unfounded. As some commentators have emphasized, there may be strong reasons to reject a syntax for the relevant temporal, modal, locational, and precision expressions according to which their syntactic mode of combination is that of taking in a closed sentence (or closed sentences) and outputting closed sentences.[2]

Second, for certain of the relevant constructions, the conclusion that semantic values are non-propositional does not follow, *even granting the relevant uniformity assumption*. Here, for various cases at hand, there is an interesting interaction between semantics and metaphysics that is worth pursuing.

The Operator Argument Regimented

The anti-Simplicity argument that we are interested in relies on a syntactic backdrop, which we will call *Sententiality*, and then proceeds via three key semantic ideas, which we call *Parameter Dependence*, *Uniformity*, and *Vacuity*.

As applied to a given expression E, the key syntactic assumption made about E has to do with *how* it syntactically combines with other expressions to generate yet larger expressions. The assumption of Sententiality is that E combines with one or more *sentences* to yield larger sentences. This contrasts with other modes of combination.[3] So, for example, the syntactic mode of combination of the adverb 'quickly' is not to combine with a sentence to generate a sentence, but rather to combine with a verb phrase to generate a larger verb phrase. The canonical syntactic mode of combination for a noun—say 'dog'—is not

so do not give the latter separate treatment. Note that Lewis proposes a semantic value for a sentence that encodes both how the sentence's truth value varies according to context of utterance and also how, even fixing the context of utterance, the truth value varies according to how this or that 'index' is varied. The former role is, roughly speaking, played by Kaplanian character. Variation relative to an index corresponds to what we in the body of the text call parameter dependence. One gets a more recognizably Kaplanian semantic value by taking a Lewisian semantic value and fixing for context of utterance.

[2] See notably King (2003).

[3] For relevant discussion, see Lewis (1998: 27).

to combine with a sentence to generate a sentence but rather to combine with a determiner, 'a', 'each', and so on, to generate a determiner phrase.[4]

The argument focuses on some complex construction of the form ES, where an expression E, manifesting Sententiality, combines with a sentence S to generate a larger sentence ES. (Just to be maximally clear: an expression need not be a sentence in order to have Sententiality; what is required is that it is of a syntactic type that combines with one or more sentences to generate a sentence.) The argument then purports to show that, when S occurs in isolation, its semantic value is not propositional. The argument takes off from the following purported insight: there is some sentence S that can be evaluated for truth only once a value along a parameter is specified—if S's content does not specify a value along the relevant parameter, S's content will not manifest propositionality. With this alleged insight as its first premiss, the Operator Argument proceeds as follows:

L1. Parameter Dependence: S is evaluable for truth only once a value along parameter M is specified.

L2. Uniformity: S is of the same semantic type when it occurs alone or when it combines with E.

L3. Vacuity: E is semantically vacuous (i.e., it does not affect truth value) when it combines with a sentence that semantically supplies a value for M.

L4. E is not redundant when it combines with S.

L5. By *Vacuity* and (L4), S does not supply a value for M when it combines with E.

L6. By *Uniformity* and (L5), S does not supply a value for M when it occurs alone.

L7. By *Parameter Dependence* and (L6), S cannot be evaluated for truth.

[4] We assume here that *sentence* is a bona fide syntactic type, and that some true syntactic theory will display sentences' architecture and order combination. We make no semantic assumptions here about whether a sentence must be propositional, evaluable for truth, and so on; and, at this point, we shall not stipulatively require that sentences be closed rather than open, though this latter issue will become relevant when we turn to critical evaluation.

Inspired by Lewis and Kaplan, one might apply this pattern of argument to the following kinds of ES pairs,

In Boston, it is raining[5]

By loose standards, he arrived at 3 p.m.[6]

On Tuesday, it rained

There could have been talking donkeys

to arrive at the conclusion that sentences can be evaluated for truth only relative to a setting of an *n*-tuple of parameters that include at least standards of precision, possible worlds, locations, and times. We'll use 'In Boston, it is raining' as an illustration:

L1. Parameter Dependence: 'It is raining' is evaluable for truth only once a location is specified.

L2. Uniformity: 'It is raining' is of the same semantic type whether it occurs alone or combines with 'in Boston'

L3. Vacuity: If 'It is raining' semantically supplies a location, then 'in Boston' is semantically vacuous (and thus cannot affect truth value) when it combines with that sentence.

L4. 'In Boston' is not redundant when it combines with 'It is raining'.

L5. By *Vacuity* and (L4), 'It is raining' does not supply a location when it combines with 'in Boston'.

L6. By *Uniformity* and (L5), 'It is raining' does not supply a location when it occurs alone.

L7. By *Parameter Dependence* and (L6), 'It is raining' cannot be evaluated for truth.

The Operator Argument is a schema. You get different arguments by plugging in different values for E and S. Our discussion of the argument focuses on the following cases, all of them central in Kaplan and Lewis:

Locational terms: ES pairs involving 'somewhere', 'in Boston', etc.

Temporal terms: ES pairs involving 'in two weeks', 'two days ago', and past, future, and present tense.

[5] Kaplan is a bit more tentative about location than Lewis. See Kaplan (1989: 502–3). See in particular n. 28.

[6] The discussion of standards of precision is in Lewis's work, not Kaplan's.

Precisional terms: ES pairs involving 'by loose standards', 'by strict standards'.

Modal terms: ES pairs involving 'possibly', 'it might be the case that'.

There is no single flaw common to all possible applications of the Operator Argument. But, in standard cases, one or more weaknesses can readily be detected. Moreover, we know of no Operator Argument against Simplicity that avoids the kinds of trouble that we are about to elucidate (though we offer no impossibility proof).

By way of orienting the reader, we begin by outlining some of the main theses that we wish to defend in this section:

- Sententiality is unmotivated for many of the standard temporal, locational, modal, and precisional constructions that figure in these arguments, the Uniformity premiss even more so.
- For temporal constructions, Uniformity is particularly questionable (and, in so far as one is a presentist, Parameter Dependence is questionable as well).
- For precisional and modal terms, Parameter Dependence is particularly questionable.

In most of the cases, our objections are fairly brief. We simply point out that the assumptions made about E and S often seem to fly in the face of linguistic data, and often assume without argument that certain popular semantic hypotheses are false. We take the upshot of our discussion to be that any attempt to develop a sound and philosophically interesting instance of the Operator Argument faces very serious obstacles. In some places we could have tried to be more ambitious. Certain popular semantic hypotheses, if true, are devastating for certain of the Operator Arguments. Had we set out to provide compelling defence of those hypotheses, our case against the relevant Operator Argument would be rendered yet more powerful. But we do not wish to overreach. A fully-fledged semantic and syntactic theory of temporal, locational, and modal discourse is beyond the scope of a short monograph such as this one, and would require the collaborative input of researchers from the relevant fields of linguistics. We shall thus rest content with our more modest ambitions, comforted by the fact that even a schematic appreciation of linguistic theory and the relevant data will be enough to cast a dark veil over many of the standard Operator Arguments.

Against Sententiality for 'in L' and 'on t'

For some of the cases in question, the assumption of Sententiality has very little syntactic plausibility. Consider 'in Boston'. One very natural—and utterly standard—account of its syntactic life is that it is an adverb that combines with a verb phrase to compose a verb phrase. On this picture, the syntactic home of 'in Boston' is much better revealed by 'He spends long hours in Boston' than it is by 'In Boston, he spends long hours'. Indeed, the acceptability of the latter is explained by a special rule of *fronting* that allows us, in certain circumstances, to move adverbs from their home to the front of a sentence. And, if that is right, then Lewis's and Kaplan's treatment of 'in Boston' as a sentential operator is the unfortunate result of being misled by surface similarities between various sentences in which 'in Boston' appears up front and the constructions of standard modal and tense logics.

In other cases we are hardly misled by fronting. The acceptability of 'Quickly, he left the building' does not tempt us into thinking that 'quickly' has Sententiality. Given that 'Quickly, he left the building' is not good evidence against a syntactic story that claims that 'quickly' combines with verb phrases to generate verb phrases, 'In Boston, he is dancing the Tango' is not evidence against an analogous story for 'in Boston'.[7,8]

Similar remarks extend to 'on Tuesday'. 'On Tuesday, he left' is a fronted version of 'He left on Tuesday'. We shall not rehearse all the relevant empirical evidence here—this is not a syntax primer. But, as far as we can tell, the upshot is this: the claim that 'in Boston' and 'on Tuesday' have Sententiality is a manifestly unacceptable claim about natural language syntax. It is not merely inconvenient to treat those expressions as sentential—such a treatment gives a deeply incorrect picture of their syntactic life.[9]

[7] Note also that fronting is not always licensed. 'He didn't run quickly' cannot felicitously be rearticulated as 'Quickly he didn't run'. 'In Boston' patterns with 'quickly' in this respect: 'He is not about to live in Boston' cannot be rearticulated as 'In Boston he is not about to live'.

[8] There are syntactic complexities about which we defer to linguistics. 'In Texas is where I want to be' is good. 'In Texas is especially beautiful' is bad. While in many respects akin to 'in Texas' in their syntactic role, 'here' and 'somewhere' are somewhat more flexible. 'Here' and 'somewhere' can always be substituted for 'in Texas' without generating syntactic infelicity, but not vice versa: 'Somewhere is especially beautiful' and 'Here is especially beautiful' are judged by many speakers to be good.

[9] Notice, then, that it is unlikely that the sentence 'He is dancing' is a syntactic constituent of 'He is dancing in Boston'. And if it is not then there is something

We see little hope of the anti-Simplicity champion mounting a successful counterattack on this syntactic front. As far as we can see, there are two ways left for him to proceed. First, he can retract some of the examples and focus on some others. Perhaps 'in Boston' lacks Sententiality but 'somewhere' does not. And perhaps the latter example is sufficient to show that various ordinary utterances lack specificity about location, hence lack propositionality.

Perhaps it is also worth mentioning a second strategy, though not one that either Kaplan or Lewis actually pursues. It proceeds via imagining various possible extensions of our natural language. The key idea is that the availability of these extensions points to actual failures of propositionality. Here is a sketch of an argument to this effect. Suppose we grant that, as a matter of fact, the syntactic life of 'in Boston' does not square with the hypothesis of Sententiality for that expression. Still, it seems that we could introduce a sentential operator 'inBoston', whose syntactic life is stipulated to manifest Sententiality. It could now be claimed that it is not hard to assign a meaning to this sentential operator so that, say, 'inBoston, it is raining' is true iff it is raining in Boston, while 'inBoston, it is raining in Miami' is true iff it is raining in Miami (and where 'inBoston' is thus redundant). The argument then proceeds by claiming that English could allow such coherent extensions only if 'It is raining' is not specific, in Kaplan's sense, with regard to location.

Since this is not a strategy Lewis or Kaplan pursues, we shall not discuss it further here, though it should be clear how the remarks that follow undermine it. We want only to emphasize that, once carefully reconstructed, the Operator Argument breaks down in some of its applications due to indefensible syntactic assumptions.

There are plenty of other relevant cases worth considering. Is it right to think of 'could' in 'He could die' as manifesting Sententiality at the level of logical form? Should we think of 'for Anna', as it occurs in 'That is tasty for Anna' as a predicate modifier or instead as a construction with Sententiality?[10] Obviously, we do not intend to undertake an exhaustive

misguided at the outset about the question whether the sentence 'He is dancing' has the same semantic content *as it occurs in* 'He is dancing in Boston' as when it occurs alone. Such a question may thus presuppose a false conception of the semantically evaluable parts of 'He is dancing in Boston'.

[10] One relevant issue is this. Suppose something is tasty for Anna, while other things are dignified for Anna. Consider the sentence 'He ate something that was tasty for Anna in a dignified way'. If we treat 'for Anna' as a sentential operator, it begins to look insufficiently selective. 'For Anna, he ate something that was tasty in a dignified way'

survey here. It is enough to have noted that the Operator Argument, as stated, requires an assumption of Sententiality, and, in a range of the standard examples, such an assumption is highly tendentious at best.[11]

Against Parameter Dependence for Standards of Precision

In many of the cases under discussion it is far from clear that the relevant claims can be evaluated for truth or falsity only when a value along the relevant parameter has been specified. We start with a relatively simple and philosophically non-loaded case, the so-called standard of precision parameter putatively exemplified by 'By loose standards, he arrived at 3 p.m.'. Let us assume that 'by loose standards' manifests Sententiality. Now, sure enough, one might try out a semantic theory according to which the content of 'Jones arrived in London at 3 p.m.', as it occurs in some context, can be evaluated for truth only relative to a standard of precision parameter. But the interaction of such sentences with constructions such as 'by loose standards' hardly mandates that treatment.[12] What is crucial to note here is that there are several strategies for developing a compositional account for 'By loose standards, Jones arrived in London at 3 p.m.' that both renders the contribution of 'by loose standards' non-redundant and also assigns a proposition to the embedded sentence.

Consider by analogy 'Give or take five minutes,[13] Jones arrived in London at 3 p.m.'. Here one could think of 'Jones arrived in London at 3 p.m.' as expressing a proposition, and the truth-conditional

fails to tie 'for Anna' to being tasty rather than to being dignified. One can try to restore the link by focus: 'For Anna, he ate something that was TASTY in a dignified way'. This in turn raises the issue of the semantic contribution of focus and its repercussions for the contribution of 'for Anna'. We cannot explore the matter here. (The example of 'for Anna' is taken from Kölbel (forthcoming), where he assumes Sententiality for that expression.)

[11] We realize that someone might try to adapt the Operator Argument in a way that drops the assumption of Sententiality. We shall not attempt to anticipate the various ways in which this might be done, and so shall leave this avenue unexplored.

[12] One point, which we note and set to one side, is that Lewis's use of 'standards-of-precision' constructions borders on philosophical jargon and does not obviously comport with the use of those constructions in English. If in English I say 'By X's standards, P', I merely mean something to the effect that the standards to which X is committed (plus relevant empirical facts) entail P, but can do this quite consistently with the thought that such standards are outrageous and that in no sense is P 'true for' X when X asserts it. Thus I can say things of the form 'By the standards of the Nazis, P' without thinking at all that the content of 'P' is somehow true for the Nazis.

[13] Here again we pretend that 'give or take five minutes' manifests Sententiality: it may obviously be more plausible to treat the sentences 'Give or take five minutes, Jones arrived in London at 3 p.m.' as involving a fronted predicate modifier and not a sentential operator.

contribution of 'give or take five minutes' as given by a function from propositions to a proposition consisting of the disjunction of those otherwise identical propositions that refer to a time within five minutes of the time referred to in the proposition it takes as an argument (we call this disjunction 'the loosening' of the original proposition). This is obviously a rough approximation, and there are various ways to work this out in detail.[14] No matter how it is worked out, the result of combining the content of 'give or take five minutes' with some proposition P will be true iff the loosening is true.[15] Similarly, one could think of the truth-conditional contribution of 'by loose standards' as given by a function from a proposition to a proposition. 'By loose standards, P' is true iff there is a true proposition in the disjunction of propositions close enough to P (where the relevant loose standards determine what counts as 'close enough' in that context.)[16,17]

Against Parameter Dependence for Modality

Let us now turn to the philosophically central topic of modality. A number of participants in the relevant debates seem to take it for

[14] For one thing, a complex sentence may refer to many times; for another, a claim may assign a period rather than a single time to the main event.

[15] Better still, perhaps, one could think of 'give or take five minutes' as either (i) a predicate modifier (that has moved up front) and think of 'arrived at 3 p.m.' as expressing a property and 'give or take five minutes' as expressing a function from properties to properties, or (ii) a parenthetical hedge that is not strictly part of the content of the sentence. It is only for pedagogical purposes that we have adopted a pretence of Sententiality for 'give or take five minutes'. Given our lack of real commitment to Sententiality, we shall not try to work out a semantics that drops the simplifying assumption in the text.

[16] Note that Lewis (1998: 31) wants the semantic value of any given sentence 'to provide information about the dependence of truth on indices'. Given that his framework treats standards of precision as an index, Lewis wants the semantic value of any sentence whatsoever to 'provide information' about how the truth value of the sentence varies according to standards of precision. On the picture proposed in the text, the semantic value of a mundane sentence does not give information about the effects of standards of precision. Those effects are given in the semantic clauses for constructions such as 'loosely speaking'.

[17] One might object that, on the proposed toy semantics, 'strictly speaking' turns out to be redundant. One relevant point here is that even if 'Strictly speaking he arrived at 3 p.m.' is true iff 'He arrived at 3 p.m.' is true, that does not mean that each sentence embeds the same way in more complex constructions (for more on this see the Vacuity section below). For another thing, and perhaps more importantly, truth-conditional equivalence is not tantamount to communicative equivalence. It is arguable that what is communicated by 'He arrived at 3 p.m.' is typically something a lot looser than the sentence's semantic content. 'Strictly speaking' may have the effect of closing the gap between semantic content and communicative import.

granted that philosophical semantics has somehow shown that the semantic values of sentences cannot be evaluated for truth or falsity *simpliciter*, since truth or falsity holds of a proposition relative to a world. This, however, is to overstate the implications of contemporary semantics. After all, no semanticist has shown that, metaphysically, actuality is just one reality among many. Indeed, an eminently natural view of things is that there are a pair of fundamental monadic properties of propositions—truth and falsity—that hold of a proposition P according to whether P.

Note here that we are by no means obliged to suppose that the proposition expressed by a sentence need somehow make explicit reference to the actual world in order to enjoy one of these monadic properties. Suppose I say 'There are no talking donkeys' and the proposition I express is not the proposition *that there are no talking donkeys at the actual world*, but just the proposition *that there are no talking donkeys*. This silence does not mean that the latter proposition cannot enjoy one of the monadic properties of true and falsity. Whether it is (monadically) true or false is determined by whether there are talking donkeys in reality—*which is the only reality there is*.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, this is not to deny that there are abstract objects—possible worlds—that will play some role in semantic theory and that, with these in place, one can also recognize relational properties of *being true at* and *being false at* that hold between propositions and possible worlds. There may be some very good reasons, moreover, for adopting a metalanguage that quantifies over these possible worlds and recognizes these relations. For example, if appropriate bridge rules between ordinary modal claims and quantificational claims about worlds are in place, we can then usefully explore various questions about the consistency and inconsistency of various modal sentences within the logically well-understood haven of a first-order language. Our ease in manipulating such a language will mean that using it as a metalanguage to give a systematic account of how modal constructions contribute to the truth conditions of sentences in a natural language will enable us to make vivid various entailment relations. But note that we can do this quite consistently with the hypothesis that the monadic properties of truth and falsehood are more fundamental than the relations of *true at* and *false at*.[18] Relatedly, one can perfectly well accept the truth

[18] Note also that, on many construals of what abstract possible worlds are, it will be overwhelmingly plausible to treat the relations of *true at* and *false at* as less fundamental

of (contingent) claims of the form 'The proposition P is true iff the proposition P is true at the actual world' without thereby thinking that the right side provides fundamental explication of the left. (Assuming the left-hand side is contingent, we can *all* agree that this is not an analysis in the traditional sense, since the left- and right-hand sides will have different modal statuses.)

In the light of the preceding remarks, let us examine the intuition that motivates an inference from non-specificity to non-propositionality in the modal case. The thought is that, unless it is determined which world a sentence is about, the sentence cannot be evaluated for truth and falsity. Let us consider the sentence 'There are no talking donkeys' and assume that at no level of deep structure does that sentence make reference to a world.[19] Now it is just not plausible that the failure to make singular reference to a particular possible world makes the sentence unevaluable for truth. Even in the absence of such singular reference, the sentence's truth turns on whether there are talking donkeys.[20]

Suppose that, along with philosophical orthodoxy, we treat modal constructions as involving sentential operators, thinking of the deep structure of 'There could be talking donkeys' as 'It could be the case that there are talking donkeys'. (We do not at all intend here to be endorsing Sententialism about 'could be' as it functions in the original sentence, but we grant it for now.) One can here perfectly well think of 'There are talking donkeys' as expressing a proposition that is true or false *simpliciter* (false, as it happens) and think of 'It could be the case that' as expressing a semantic value that combines with a proposition to yield a proposition. In so far as one uses 'It could be the case that'

than the monadic properties *true* and *false*. Thus suppose, in line with one respectable tradition, we treat a possible world as a maximally consistent proposition. Then for a proposition P to be true at some possible world W comes to this: W is a proposition that could be true; there is no stronger proposition R that entails W that could be true; and W entails P.

[19] We shall return to this assumption later.

[20] Note that we could, of course, having introduced the ideology of 'true at', adopt a looser notion of *talking about a possible world*. In the looser sense, the possible world a sentence (at a context) is talking about is that world such that, if the proposition expressed by the sentence is true at that world, then the proposition is monadically true. But, in that sense, it is clear that there is a particular world that the sentence is talking about—the actual world—whether or not it actually contains a device for singular reference to the actual world. In sum, on one understanding it is not plausible to require that a sentence talk about a particular world in order for it to have monadic truth; while, on the natural alternative understanding, the requirement is easily satisfied by the sentences under consideration, even if they make no reference to the actual world.

in one's metalanguage, one should characterize the contribution of that operator disquotationally.[21] So, for example, if S means that P, then the result of combining 'It could be that' with S is true iff it could be the case that P.[22,23]

Against Locational Parameter Dependence

Let us now turn to the case of spatial location. Here, too, Parameter Dependence seems immensely implausible. Let us take the claim 'Ernie is dancing'. This claim does not seem to involve singular reference to a particular location, but is nevertheless perfectly well evaluable for truth. An utterance of that claim is true iff Ernie is dancing somewhere or other. Now, of course, there is a perfectly good sense in which this claim is non-specific about location: it does not specify where Ernie is dancing. But that hardly deprives the claim of truth-evaluability. The claim 'Ernie killed an animal the other day' is not specific about which species of animal Ernie killed. But no one would think that this kind of neutrality makes trouble for truth-evaluability.

The defender of Parameter Dependence for location might say that the proposition we evaluate for truth is, after all, about a particular place. Let 'Big' be a name for the fusion of all places, the maximal place. One might suggest that what we evaluate as true when we hear 'Ernie is dancing' is the proposition *that Ernie is dancing at Big*. If this were right, then the Lewisian argument could proceed.[24] But the suggestion is not intuitive: it does not seem that the original claim makes singular reference to Big. Nor does it at all seem that reference to

[21] In general, we do not see any reason why a semantic theory should come up with non-disquotational descriptions of truth-conditional effects. To require that is to endorse a wildly implausible form of semantic reductionism.

[22] For more on semantics with a modal metalanguage that proceeds in this vein, see Williamson (2007: ch. 5, app. 1).

[23] If one likes the image of structured propositions, one can think of a sentence of the form 'It could be the case that S' as expressing a proposition that contains the proposition expressed by S as a proper constituent. We shall not speculate about such mereological matters here. Nor shall we speculate about whether the relevant type of combination between semantic values is function-argument application or something else. If one is enamoured with the function argument approach, one can think of the semantic value of 'It could be the case that' as a function from propositions to truth values, where the function delivers True relative to a proposition x as argument iff x could be the case.

[24] The key idea would be that, while it is this enriched proposition that gets assigned a truth value, it could not uniformly be the semantic value of 'Ernie is dancing', since that

Big is somehow necessary for the original claim being truth-evaluable. Pending powerful theoretical reasons in its favour, the suggestion is wildly unmotivated.

Notice the disanalogy here between the case of location and worlds. For heuristic purposes, let us avail ourselves of the language of 'true at' for locations and also for worlds. It does not matter which location 'Ernie is dancing' is *true at* in order for 'Ernie is dancing' to be true. But it does matter which world 'Ernie is dancing' is *true at* in order for 'Ernie is dancing' to be true. That is because the truth-evaluablity of 'Ernie is dancing' is quite compatible with perfect neutrality as to which location Ernie is dancing at. As far as worlds are concerned, 'Ernie is dancing' does not have to specify a world in order to be truth-evaluable, but that is not because it is perfectly neutral as to which world Ernie is dancing at. It is, rather, because in general a proposition P is (monadically) true iff P is true at the actual world. (As pointed out above, this equation does not commit us to the idea that *truth at* is more fundamental than *truth*.) Thus, even though the Parameter Dependence premiss is unconvincing as applied to both locations and worlds, it breaks down for slightly different reasons in each case. The relevant contrast between time and location is brought out by the fact that the inference from 'In my favourite city, Ernie is dancing' to 'Ernie is dancing' is valid, while the inference from 'In God's favourite possible world, Ernie is dancing' to 'Ernie is dancing' is not.

Before we move on to tense, let us pretend for one moment that the construction 'in Boston' enjoys Sententiality. Would it make trouble if we supposed that, even as it occurs in 'In Boston, Ernie is dancing', 'Ernie is dancing' expresses a proposition? As should already be clear, the answer is 'no'. Just as propositionality provides no principled obstacle to a compositional account of 'give or take five minutes', so it provides no principled obstacle to a compositional account of 'in Boston'. Here, as in the case of 'give or take five minutes' and 'could be', the truth-conditional contribution of 'in Boston' could be represented by a function from propositions to propositions.[25]

would make a hash of the behaviour in complex sentences; hence, given the uniformity assumption, the thing that gets evaluated for truth could not be the semantic value of 'Ernie is dancing', even as it occurs in isolation. Note that, even granting the proposed set-up, the argument will fail on the score of L2. See discussion below.

[25] We have already said that we do not think that 'in Boston' is really sentential. We do acknowledge that, if one were to try to introduce a sentential operator of the sort gestured at, and were to try to specify its truth conditions in a non-homophonic

Parameter Dependence and Time

We conclude our discussion of Parameter Dependence by looking at the case of time. What one says here will, to some extent, depend on one's metaphysical perspective, and in particular on whether one is a presentist or eternalist about time. We consider these options in turn.

On the metaphysical approach to time known as presentism, one may be tempted to offer remarks about temporality and Parameter Dependence that are analogous to those we made about modality. Just as we standardly think that actual reality exhausts reality, so the presentist thinks that current reality exhausts reality. The presentist will thus think that 'There are no dinosaurs' can be evaluated for truth and falsity *simpliciter*, even if it makes no reference to any particular time: its truth value is determined by current reality—which is the only reality there is. Of course, such a presentist may allow for a domain of abstract objects—past and future times (perhaps thought of as the richest propositions that either were once true or will be true[26])—and allow for relations of *true at* or *false at* that hold between propositions and those abstract objects. And he may give an account of sentential tense operators using a metalanguage that is structurally analogous to the one just described for the modal case.[27] For reasons analogous to those given above, all this is quite consistent with a presentist view that propositions can be evaluated as true or false *simpliciter* without having to make reference to a particular time.[28]

Eternalists hold that all times are equally real. In this respect, for the eternalist time is like space. However, despite this metaphysical analogy, there is a striking semantic difference. For while it is plausible that an

way, there would be plenty of decision points to confront. Does it distribute over disjunction and conjunction? Does it commute with negation? And so on. On the simplifying assumption that all propositions have an underlying structure that involves one main event quantifier, matters get easier. Let the Boston-restrictor of a proposition be the result of restricting the domain of its main event quantifier to events in Boston. Then, for any P, the proposition *that in Boston, P* is true iff the Boston restrictor of P is true.

[26] We shall not worry here about delicate problems that arise from the possibility of duplicate times.

[27] For example, just as the actualist thinks that, for all P, P iff Actually P, so the Presentist thinks that, for all P, P iff Now P.

[28] The presentist might naturally argue that the proposition that there are no dinosaurs is not the proposition that there are no dinosaurs now, since the former, but not the latter, used to be false. (As subsequent discussion will reveal, we are a little nervous about this style of argument.)

utterance of 'Ernie is dancing' is perfectly neutral about which location Ernie is dancing at, it is not neutral about whether Ernie is dancing at the time of utterance or at some other time. In other words, for an eternalist, it does seem plausible that the proposition that we evaluate for truth is one that specifies a particular time.[29] For the eternalist, the relevant version of Parameter Dependence is fairly plausible. That, however, is not to say that the Lewisian argument will run smoothly in this case. One problem we have already touched on is the relevant Sententiality assumption. A further problem is Uniformity, to which we now turn.

Against Uniformity for 'Somewhere It Is Raining'

We turn now to a discussion of Uniformity. Let us begin with the claim that the stand-alone 'It is raining' has the same semantic value as an occurrence of that sentence within the scope of 'somewhere' in 'Somewhere it is raining'. One can recover a variety of semantic models and hypotheses from the literature concerning 'Somewhere it is raining' that are incompatible with Uniformity. One kind of popular model—the hidden-pronoun model—claims that certain expressions invariably have a hidden pronoun associated with them. That hidden pronoun, the story runs, can then either function referentially or else be bound by a quantifier. So, for example, one might hypothesize that the deep structure of 'It is raining' is 'It is raining *at x*', and then allow that in some contexts the hidden pronoun refers to some salient location while in others it is bound by a quantifier. This gives one a *prima facie* natural account of what is going on with 'Somewhere it is raining': 'Somewhere' combines with something semantically tantamount to an open sentence in 'Somewhere it is raining'. This, of course, is perfectly compatible with the view that 'It is raining' expresses a singular proposition when it occurs alone—that is, with the denial of Uniformity.

There are other ways to undermine the Uniformity assumption for 'somewhere' and we will briefly mention one. According to the trace-generation model, 'Somewhere it is raining' is generated by forward movement of 'somewhere' from 'It is raining somewhere', where the

[29] How about 'Ernie danced'? Here, some period from the past—in some contexts very precise, in other contexts much larger—is plugged in when we evaluate an utterance for truth at a context.

movement leaves behind a trace that is bound by 'somewhere'. This approach does not require that 'rain' always carries around a hidden pronoun with it.[30] But, as far as the logical structure of 'Somewhere it is raining' is concerned, the story will be analogous to the previous one: 'somewhere' will combine with something tantamount to an open sentence.

An analogy with 'somehow' is useful here. Compare the stand-alone 'Jason passed the exam' and its occurrence within the scope of 'somehow' in 'Somehow, Jason passed the exam'. We take it that no one would argue that the complex 'Somehow Jason passed the exam' provides grounds for thinking that 'Jason passed the exam', as it occurs in isolation, is non-propositional. The reason this would be a silly argument is obvious: in the complex case, 'somehow' combines with something open-sentence-like (that contains a manner variable) to generate 'Somehow Jason passed the exam'. In other words, it seems pretty obvious that we should reject the relevant uniformity claim for 'Jason passed the exam'. Once Uniformity is denied in connection with 'somehow', it becomes wildly implausible to require it for 'somewhere'.[31]

[30] Note that the first approach, as applied to say 'Somewhere Ernie is dancing', would seem to suggest that 'dance' also invariably carries a hidden pronoun with it. But it is not true that 'Ernie is dancing' is invariably heard as restricted to a region. It is incumbent upon the second approach to account for the mechanism whereby, typically, isolated utterances of 'It is raining' are heard as restricted to a region. One way this might be accounted for is by giving a Davidsonian-event analysis to 'It is raining' according to which it has the underlying structure 'There is a raining event', and then allowing for the possibility of restrictions on the quantifier. For more on these issues see Cappelen and Hawthorne (2007).

[31] The stories just given do not challenge Sententiality for 'somewhere', for they suggest that it combines with open sentences. We note in passing, though, that variants of the story are not even consistent with Sententiality. For example, one popular idea about quantifiers is that they combine with complex predicates, not open sentences. As a toy model, we might suppose that, in 'Somewhere Ernie is dancing', 'somewhere' combines, at the level of deep structure, with a complex predicate of the form 'λl (Ernie is dancing at l)'. We shall not pursue the relevant choice points here. We should, however, emphasize that, whether or not 'somewhere' combines with an open sentence or a complex predicate, the kinds of stories just provided do not encourage us to think that, in so far as the semantic value associated with 'Ernie is dancing' as it occurs in 'Somewhere Ernie is dancing' is non-propositional, we should expect isolated occurrences of 'Ernie is dancing' to be non-propositional. (We use 'associated with' in places as tacit recognition of the fact that it may very well be misleading to think of overt graphemic and phonemic events to be the bearers of semantic value. It may cut things at the semantic joints far better to associate semantic values with elements that occur at a covert level of representation. Sometimes it is harmless to speak of semantic values as attaching to overt events; but it may not be harmless here, and may indeed have hampered Lewis.)

Uniformity and Tense

In the preceding few paragraphs we have focused on the ostensible quantifier 'somewhere'. Similar consideration will apply to ostensibly quantificational temporal constructions such as 'sometimes', 'most of the time', and so on. What of a Kaplanian account of the less ostensibly quantificational phenomenon of tense? Lewis and Kaplan take it to be at worst quite harmless to treat these constructions as having a structure equivalent to constructions familiar from intensional logic where a sentential operator combines with a sentence. Thus, 'Ernie danced' is treated as tantamount to 'It was the case that Ernie dances', where 'Ernie dances' is to be heard as itself tenseless. Here the argument is in one way even harder to get off the ground. There is at least face-value plausibility to claim that a constituent of 'Somewhere Ernie is dancing' is one that sometimes stands alone as the vehicle of an assertion. There is far less face-value plausibility to the claim that there is some constituent of 'Ernie danced' that (i) involves stripping a past-tense-marking constituent from 'Ernie danced' and (ii) can stand alone as a vehicle of assertion.[32] If there is no such constituent, the argument, applied to tense, does not even get off the ground.

It might be worth noting in passing that, as King (2003) has emphasized, there may be good linguistic evidence that, while it may not be superficially manifest, tense involves quantification over times. To cite a representative example, certain anaphoric phenomena are naturally explained on the supposition that tense has this structure. Thus, consider the sequence:

He left the party. At that time there were still a lot of people there.

On the supposition that the first sentence has a structure along the lines of 'There was a past time t such that he left the party', then the above sequence can be modelled semantically along the lines of one's favourite account of 'There was a donkey that was in the park. That donkey . . .'.[33] By contrast, a treatment of the first sentence on the

[32] There is some plausibility to the thesis that the naked 'Ernie dance' in 'I saw Ernie dance' is tenseless, but that that naked construction is not a stand-alone vehicle of assertion.

[33] In many settings the first sentence is naturally interpreted as saying of a particular time t that the subject left the party at t. This would not be captured by the quantificational gloss. But it is hardly comforting to the operator view. See n. 37 below.

model of the intensional operators in standard tense logic provides no natural basis for an account of these phenomena. And of course, if tense is quantificational, most of the remarks above about 'somewhere' carry over straightforwardly.[34,35,36]

But let us not get too caught up in these debates. Whether or not tense is quantificational, it bears emphasis that the Kaplanian argument can get off the ground only if some good case is made that the stand-alone

[34] As with a number of other phenomena that King discusses, he does not mention that similar considerations hold for analogous modal constructions. Thus, consider 'He might have left. In that situation, a lot of people would have been unhappy'. It is also worth noting that, as evidence for concealed quantification, the present type of evidence is somewhat thin. After all, the following speech is felicitous: 'In one match he scored six goals. That pair of boots became his favourite possession.' Yet no one takes this as evidence for concealed quantification over pairs of boots. (Thanks to Timothy Williamson here.)

[35] Consider also the following kind of case (from Partee 1973), discussed by King, that is used to provide evidence that the past tense cannot be treated as an operator of the sort one finds in standard tense logic:

1. John turned off the stove

On a natural interpretation, (1) says of some particular time (or period) t that is past that, at t, John turned off the stove. A past-tense operator is not the kind of device that enables us to pick out particular times. So it looks as though the past tense is not to be treated as an operator. The view that tenses are operators also gives wrong predictions about how temporal adverbs like 'yesterday' interact with the past tense. Consider (2) (from Dowty 1982):

2. Yesterday, John turned off the stove

As King points out, if we treat 'yesterday' and the past-tense morpheme as operators, (2) should have two readings:

2.1. Y (P (John turns off the stove))
2.2. P (Y (John turns off the stove))

Where (2.1) would be true if there is a day prior to yesterday such that, at some time prior to that day, John turns off the stove. But (2) has no such reading. (Note in passing that analogous considerations can be brought to bear upon modal discourse. Consider the sentence 'Most possible situations are ones in which John could win the race'. It is not at all natural to hear a reading where this is tantamount to: It is possible that most situations are ones in which John wins. By parity of reasoning, we can leverage this against an operator-style treatment of 'could' modelled on standard modal logic.)

[36] Some languages—Chinese, for example—do not have a tense structure. One could try running Kaplanian operator arguments for the Chinese analogue of 'tomorrow', where questions about the contribution of tense will be irrelevant. Here, still, there will obviously be hypotheses that are not Uniformity-friendly that have to be ruled out. In particular, the challenge will be to combat hypotheses that allow that superficially similar utterances typically encode different covert references to times.

'Ernie is dancing' is somehow a constituent of 'Ernie danced'.[37] No such case has been made.

A Note on Vacuity

While it is not one of our central concerns, we mention in passing that the Vacuity premiss (L3) in the reconstructed argument is far from sacrosanct. Let us pretend that 'in Boston' enjoys Sententiality. It is far from straightforwardly true that, if 'Ernie is dancing' semantically supplies a location, then 'in Boston' is redundant. After all, some locations are proper parts of other locations. 'in L' locutions can, for this reason, be stacked:

John is dancing in Boston in New England

is perfectly acceptable.[38] Thus, if 'Ernie is dancing' semantically supplied a location larger than Boston, there would be no trouble in principle for 'in Boston' to make a non-vacuous contribution to 'In Boston, Ernie is dancing'. But there is no obvious redundancy worry here even once all the other premisses are granted. (Similarly, if in some context 'Ernie danced' semantically supplied a period of time that encompassed the whole past—and so had the logical form 'Ernie danced during period p'—that would hardly generate a threat of Vacuity for 'On Tuesday, Ernie danced'.)

We emphasize that our point here is not to theorize about the actual semantic mechanism for 'in Boston'. Indeed, we have already said that it in fact is not even sentential.[39] We merely wish to remind

[37] Suppose one thought, for example, *contra* the quantifier approach, that the underlying structure of 'Ernie is dancing' is 'Currently: Ernie dance' and that the underlying structure of 'Ernie danced' is 'It was the case that: Ernie dance'. Still, it would not be true that the present-tense sentence is a constituent of the past-tense one (only a proper part of the present-tense sentence figures as a such a constituent), and so a crucial assumption of Uniformity will fail. We may also note in passing that 'Ernie dance' as it occurs in 'Currently: Ernie dance' need not be treated as non-propositional. On the hypothesis that 'Ernie dance' is true iff Ernie dances at some time or other and that 'currently' functions as a restrictor, the intuitively correct truth conditions will result. This is yet a further illustration of the difficulty in securing non-propositionality from operator considerations (one that recapitulates a point made about 'in Boston' above).

[38] Suppose Boston merely overlapped New England but was not part of it. Would this sentence still be acceptable if Ernie were dancing in a place that was part of both? We shall not fuss about such issues here.

[39] Note that 'In New England, it is raining in Boston' sounds a lot more natural than 'In Boston it is raining in New England'; but the threat of Vacuity of the initial 'operator' is more serious in the first case than in the second.

the reader of another logical loophole in the relevant argument for non-propositionality.[40]

It is also worth remarking that Vacuity—in the sense described—is not always such a terrible thing. First, it may be true that, in so far as a sentence S has a particular truth value, the combination ES has that truth value as well, and yet S and ES make different contributions to truth value when embedded in certain more complex constructions. We see this with 'actually'. It is vacuous, in the sense described. Yet, for well-known reasons, 'Actually P' and 'P' embed differently in modal environments. Secondly, an expression can be communicatively significant, even if it is semantically vacuous in the sense described. Thus, suppose that we embrace the schema 'By strict standards P is true iff P'. This does not mean that 'by strict standards' is communicatively ineffective. After all, on the view that such a schema is correct, the propositions that one normally tried to get one's audience to believe by uttering 'P' often fail to include the proposition semantically expressed. (When one utters 'He arrived at 3 p.m.', one is not trying to get one's audience to believe that the person in question arrived at exactly 3 p.m.) Uttering 'By strict standards P' may play the role of helping one to communicate the proposition semantically expressed by 'P' in a situation where people might otherwise think that one was trying to communicate rather weaker information.

TAKING STOCK

This concludes our evaluation of the regimented Kaplanian argument. Proponents of Simplicity have available to them an abundance of strategies for blocking various versions of that Argument. Which strategy a proponent of Simplicity will opt for depends in part upon which particular constructions are under consideration, in part upon metaphysical commitments, and in part upon her views of cutting-edge debates within semantic theory. To avoid taking a stand on tendentious

[40] Note that the Vacuity premiss could be weakened to the claim that, if a maximally fine-grained parameter value is provided, then the operator will be redundant. This would implement Kaplan's original idea that content must be neutral with regard to features an operator is 'interested in' if the operator is to be non-vacuous. But that weakening would not make an argument for non-propositionality any easier to pull off. After all, supplying a less-than-maximally-fine-grained parameter value for time (as in 'He left yesterday') does not, by anyone's lights, deprive a claim of propositionality.

issues, we have at some points remained neutral about the best pro-Simplicity strategies. But we hope to have at least done enough to indicate that standard Operator Arguments need much more compelling motivation than they are typically given, and to show that there are plenty of promising resources available to a proponent of Simplicity who wishes to rebut those arguments. The Operator Argument should not be feared.[41]

In the remainder of this chapter we first consider an importantly different, but related, argument against Simplicity, one based on certain anaphoric constructions. We then say more about the relationship between Simplicity, Contingency, and Temporality. We end the chapter with some direct objections to the view about tense that Kaplan, Lewis, and those following their lead defend. These are objections that spring naturally from the considerations about agreement and shared content developed in Chapter 2.

THE ANAPHORIC 'THAT' AS AN OBJECTION TO SIMPLICITY

In this section, we briefly examine a tempting style of argument against Simplicity that is entertained by Kaplan (1989), Dummett (1991), Stanley (1997*a*, *b*), Richard (2003), and others.[42] Suppose someone says 'It is raining', and it is clear that she is intending to communicate

[41] We should briefly note that Dummett (1991), and, following Dummett, Stanley (1997*a*, *b*) used a closely related Anti-Simplicity argument. They distinguish between *Assertoric Content* (AC) and *Ingredient Sense* (IS). Assertoric contents have three properties:

(a) they can be true or false *simpliciter* (i.e., satisfy T1)
(b) they can be objects of illocutionary force (i.e., satisfy T3)
(c) they can be the objects of propositional attitudes (i.e., satisfy T4)

By Ingredient Sense, Dummett and Stanley mean a sentence's compositional semantic value. Stanley (1997*a*: 575) says: 'It is the semantic value we must assign to a sentence in order to predict correctly the conditions under which more complex constructions in which it occurs are true.' Dummett and Stanley argue that Assertoric Content cannot serve as Ingredient Sense. On that basis they deny Simplicity. Unfortunately, the Dummett/Stanley argument is insufficiently explicit in its semantic and syntactic assumptions to be susceptible to rigorous evaluation. On perhaps the most charitable construal, it is simply an inexplicit version of the Operator Argument, hence we do not see that it warrants separate discussion in the main text. We leave it as a (fairly straightforward) exercise for the reader to apply our objections to Stanley's argument.

[42] Certain of these authors use this style of argument to claim that Simplicity straightforwardly fails for the semantic values of certain sentences. Others (Dummett,

that it is raining at a certain location, say, London. It may nevertheless be quite natural for an interlocutor to say things like 'That isn't true in Boston' and 'What you said isn't true in Boston'. The argument then proceeds as follows.

(i) The anaphoric devices 'that' and 'what you said' in the follow-up speeches pick up on the semantic value of the original speech.

(ii) If the semantic value of the original speech encoded reference to a particular location, then it would be infelicitous to claim that those very semantic values would be true at a different location.

(iii) But the follow-up speeches are felicitous.

(iv) Therefore, the relevant semantic value of the original speech does not encode reference to a particular location.

Illustration:

A: It is raining.

B: That won't be true tomorrow/What you said won't be true tomorrow.

The argument encourages us to conclude from this exchange that the semantic value of A's utterance does not encode reference to a particular time. Next, consider:

A: It is raining.

B: That wouldn't be true if the rain gods had been in a good mood.[43]

This exchange, according to the argument now under consideration, supports the conclusion that the semantic value of A's utterance does not encode reference to a particular world.

In so far as these arguments are to be used against Simplicity, one needs to add a further premiss of the form 'If the relevant semantic value does not encode a particular location/possible world/time, then it isn't true or false *simpliciter*'. We have already cast doubt on certain instances of the latter premiss. But it is nevertheless worth addressing the style of argument for (iv) presented above.

Stanley, Richard) use it to argue that a given sentence will have multiple semantic values associated with it and that Simplicity will fail for at least one of those values.

[43] Or 'What you said wouldn't have been true if the rain gods had been in a good mood'.

To throw its shortcomings into sharp relief consider:

A: My parents won't listen to me.

B: That is my problem as well.[44]

This has a reading where B is expressing an attitude about his own parents and not A's parents. But, as far as we know, no one has used this phenomenon to argue that A's original speech is somehow semantically neutral about whose parents are being talked about.[45] This is already a sign that something is awry.

Notice also that the relevant phenomenon arises for:

A: People are suffering in the neighbourhood because local shopkeepers are getting greedy.

B: That is causing a lot of problems in my neighbourhood, too.

A: He should have turned right instead of left.

B: That is what I should have done, too.

Here, again there are so-called sloppy readings available, where the relevant locality and orientation can shift across A's and B's cases.

Consider next:

A: People are dancing the waltz in Boston.

B: That is true in New York as well.

A: It is raining hard in Boston.

B: That is true in New York as well.

Clearly, 'that' does not stand in here for a content that makes reference to Boston. But it would be absurd to conclude from this that the city of Boston does not figure as part of the content of A's utterance.

Consider finally:

A: The discos are empty this week.

B: That won't be true next week.

[44] Note that such examples cannot in general be treated as *straightforward* ellipsis (where the first sentence is copied over but unvoiced), for that would not account for the felicity of the sloppy reading of 'My parents won't listen to me. That is Bob's problem as well.'

[45] Nor has this been used to try to show that 'My parents won't listen to me' has an 'ingredient content' as well as an 'assertoric content'.

Clearly 'that' in B's utterance does not stand in for a content that makes reference to the period referred to by 'this week' in A's utterance. But it would be absurd to conclude from this that 'this week' is semantically inert in A's utterance.

Note that this last case is particularly telling when juxtaposed with the line of thought with which we began this section. As one looks over these cases, it becomes clear that premiss (i), as it figures in the relevant anti-Simplicity arguments, is altogether dubious. But then the relevant arguments do not get off the ground.[46]

The fact that those anti-Simplicity arguments are no good does not, of course, yet provide us with a complete understanding of how the relevant anaphoric devices do work. One popular style of account builds upon the lambda abstraction manoeuvres described in Chapter 2. The basic idea is that, in the case of sloppy readings, 'that' and similar anaphoric devices copy over not the propositional content of the original speech, but instead some property generated by lambda abstraction. To pick a standard example: the sequence 'Jones killed himself. Smith

[46] Mark Richard gives another much discussed argument against temporally neutral propositions. He asks us to consider the following piece of reasoning: (1) Mary believed that Nixon was president; (2) Mary still believes everything she once believed; ergo (3) Mary believes that Nixon is president. Richard (1981: 4) points out that 'this argument is not valid in English' and 'we ought to reject any position which is committed to its validity'. The trouble is that arguments like this assume that expressions like 'believes the same thing she once belived' and 'believes everything she once believed' track shared semantic content. But this assumption is faulty. To begin, there are contexts where it is true to say 'Alfred thinks he is hungry and Bill thinks the same thing', but where it is infelicitous to conclude that Bill thinks that Alfred is hungry. Similarly, if Alfred asks God to make a clone who thinks everything that he is thinking, then, even assuming that Alfred thinks he is hungry, it is not natural to hear the instruction as requiring God to make a clone that thinks that Alfred is hungry (rather, it is natural to hear the instruction as requiring God, *inter alia*, to make a clone that thinks that he is hungry). There are similar puzzles about 'Everything he did' and 'X did the same thing as Y'. After all, there are plenty of contexts where 'Bob killed himself' and 'Jim did everything Bob did' do not license 'Jim killed Bob'. (The same goes for 'Jim did the same thing' and 'The same thing happened to Frank'.) Consider also: 'That bridge fell over because it was made from cheap materials. That other bridge fell over for the same reason.' It is beyond the scope of this work to provide a full account of these quantifier phrases (the untold story would certainly have to be integrated with the full story for the anaphoric devices discussed in the text). Obviously, we are doubtful that these constructions are good guides to sameness and difference of semantic value. (Richard's later self endorses a more liberal position according to which sentences have two kinds of semantic values, one temporally unspecific, one specific. But, since the argument presented there is essentially the bad argument from the anaphoric uses of 'that' we are utterly unmoved by it. See Richard (2003).)

did, too' gets accounted for by understanding the first as having the structure

Jones λx (x killed x)

and then construing the property expressed by the lambda expression as getting copied over to the second sentence.[47] The literature has raised a number of puzzles and challenges for this approach as a general treatment of sloppy phenomena. Note, for example, that we would like a sloppy reading of the second sentence in the sequence 'Jones thinks his parents are nice. Bill thinks that, too' to be given by

Jones λx (x thinks the parents of x are nice)

But a simple account of the copying mechanism (where 'That' picked up a property expressed by a lambda expression) will not account for this. It will not deliver the lambda-abstracted verb phrase that we want. What we want is a lambda expression that includes 'thinks' within its scope. It lies outside the ambitions of this work—and also outside our sphere of technical competence—to contrive a general account of the relevant anaphoric devices that resolve this and other challenges.[48] The difficulties in providing a systematic account of the relevant anaphoric devices do not make the original anti-Simplicity arguments any better: it is enough for our purposes to note that they are patently bad.

[47] Supposing that the 'that' in 'That is true in Boston' picks up on a complex property, it might be complained that this fails to square with the use of 'true in Boston': properties are not the sorts of things that can be true or false. But the subsequent speech does not ascribe truth or falsity *simpliciter* to the referent of 'that': it ascribes the property of *being true in Boston*. There seems no deep obstacle to an account of 'true in' according to which the relevant property can be *true in* a place. It is natural to talk about such a property being true in a place L when (*a*) the natural range of candidate assignments to the variable in the lambda expression are locations, and (*b*) the complex predicate is true when predicated of L. Moreover, just as we distinguish between the properties of *being true* and *being true in*, where the latter turns out to be a relation between a complex property and a location, so we can distinguish between the properties of *being true* and *being true at*, where the latter is a relation between a complex property and a time. This can form the basis for an understanding of such constructions as 'That used to be true'.

[48] Mark Baker suggested in conversation that a better model of the function of 'that' may be one according to which predicates always occur at lambda expressions at logical form but where 'that' copies over not a complete lambda expression but instead an open sentence that occurs at logical form (where that open sentence is then bound by a lambda expression that scopes over it). Thus we may imagine that 'Jones thinks his parents are nice' reads as 'Jones λx (x thinks the parents of x are nice)' and where the 'that' in 'Bill thinks that, too' copies over the open sentence 'the parents of x are nice', which is then bound by the lambda operator that occurs at the beginning of the predicate 'thinks that, too' that is applied to Bill.

In sum, the relevant arguments against propositionality from the anaphoric 'that' and 'what he/she said' introduce no interestingly new data beyond that presented by 'My father is a nice man. That/What you said is . . .'. But, since no one is much motivated to anti-propositionality by the latter data—nor should they be—there is nothing compelling whatsoever about the anti-propositionality arguments under consideration.[49]

MORE ON SIMPLICITY: CONTINGENCY AND TEMPORALITY

We have defended the Simple View against the Kaplan/Lewis Operator Argument and a companion argument from anaphora. It is worth being explicit about how, if at all, the remarks so far connect to the hypotheses of Contingency and Temporality introduced in Chapter 1. (Most of what we say here will recap earlier discussion, and will in any case be familiar territory for many readers.) Reminder:

- *Contingency* is the thesis that some propositions that are true *simpliciter* might have been false.
- *Temporality* is the thesis that some propositions that are true *simpliciter* will be false or were false.

Let us begin with Contingency. Certainly, our defence of Simplicity against Lewis and Kaplan has not required us to dispense with Contingency. (Indeed, we have in general proceeded as if Contingency were true.) After all, there was, in the end, no deep threat to Simplicity posed by the hypothesis that the semantic value of some speech is true at some world and false at others. For this hypothesis is quite compatible with the hypothesis that this semantic value is true or false *simpliciter*—one merely needs to be careful not to jumble alethic properties.

We do note, however, that the remarks of the preceding section undermine one common argument in favour of Contingency, for it is

[49] Note that, while the relevant anaphoric 'that's do not always pick up on the entire semantic content of the original sentence, we should expect there to be settings in which the full content is picked up. Might one try to argue against Simplicity by arguing that no anaphoric use tied to 'It is raining' is tied to the alleged semantically thick content? There are no good prospects for such an argument, since the premiss is false. If, during a battle, someone says 'It is raining' and someone else replies 'That will turn out to be very important', there is a natural reading where 'that' picks up a content that includes a particular time and location.

often thought decisive evidence for Contingency that sequences of the following sort are in order:

> There are no talking donkeys. That is true but that could have been false.

Suppose that, as a strike against Contingency, we took the semantic value of the initial sentence—that is, 'There are no talking donkeys'—to be of the form

> There are no talking donkeys at the actual world.

The line of thought proceeds by claiming that this would make a hash of the follow-up speech, since the rigidifying effects of 'at the actual world' make the semantic value of the first speech true at all worlds. But the devices of the preceding section could be used to disarm this argument. Suppose (letting 'Alpha' name the actual world) we analyse the first speech as:

> Alpha: λw (there are no talking donkeys at w)

Then a subsequent use of 'that' could pick up a complex property, and the follow-up speech would make sense after all.[50] One might, along these lines, defend the view that Contingency fails for at least all the semantic values of ordinary assertions and for all the objects of the ordinary propositional attitudes. At least when 'proposition' is restricted to semantic values of this class, Contingency would then fail.[51]

The anti-Contingency line assumes, *inter alia*, that ordinary discourse covertly uses a deep structure that quantifies over worlds and ubiquitously uses a device of singular reference to the actual world. This contrasts with our default perspective, one according to which, while a world-quantifying metalanguage may be useful for some purposes, it does not describe the structure of the natural language. Exploration of and adjudication between these perspectives would take us far beyond the scope of this current study. Since neither side of the debate need question Simplicity, we need not pursue the matter further in these pages.

[50] A diagnosis based on n. 48 would differ slightly in detail but not in philosophical substance.

[51] As Timothy Williamson noted, there may be a fallback argument for Contingency. After all, the view sketched predicts that we should be able to hear non-sloppy readings for the relevant anaphoric devices. But can we? We shall not pursue the matter further here.

Let us next turn briefly to Temporality. We have pointed to a way of reconciling Temporality with Simplicity—namely, Presentism: by supposing that only the present is real we can allow that the semantic values of certain ordinary assertions are true *simpliciter* but will be false. Of course, the metaphysical perspective of Presentism does not require that one take this attitude about ordinary speeches. In the preceding paragraph we saw the possibility of combining the view that only one possible world corresponds to concrete reality with the view that the semantic values of ordinary speeches are non-contingent, owing to covert world-indexing in ordinary language. Similarly, one might combine the view that only one time—the present time—corresponds to a concrete reality with the view that the semantic values of ordinary speeches are permanently true or false, owing to covert time-indexing in ordinary language.

Turning to an eternalist perspective, one according to which all times are equally concrete, it is much harder to reconcile Temporality with Simplicity. In the case of location, it is natural to say both that 'Ernie is dancing' makes no reference to a location and that it is true *simpliciter*, since the location of the dancing is intuitively irrelevant to its truth. But, as we noted earlier, one is far less comfortable in saying that 'Ernie is dancing' makes no reference to a time, but is true *simpliciter*. After all (leaving aside *recherché* cases), it is intuitively crucial that the time of the dancing include the time of speaking. In so far as all times are equally real, but the semantic value of 'Ernie is dancing' does not select a particular time, it seems that the content that we intuitively evaluate for truth is one that is richer than the semantic value of 'Ernie is dancing'. In sum, and not surprisingly, Simplicity, Eternalism, and Temporality do not sit comfortably together.[52]

AGAINST THIN CONTENTS: TENSE AND AGREEMENT

We end this chapter by noting that materials from the previous chapter provide strong positive reason to reject the style of semantics favoured

[52] Note that the thesis that all times exist does not by itself make trouble for Temporality. One might think that only one time is concrete—even though others were or will be—and in this spirit still allow for Temporality. (Such a view is entertained in Williamson (1999).)

by proponents of the Operator Argument. Let us begin with location. A fan of 'say-that' reporting arguments might think there is good *prima facie* evidence in favour of the Kaplanian approach. Suppose Janet and John are in different locations and both sincerely utter 'It is raining' (intending to talk about their own location). We can report their illocutionary acts by 'They both said that it was raining' and report their belief states by 'They both believed that it was raining'. But we have argued that this kind of data is poor grounds for claiming unity of semantic value of the utterances. A far better test, we have argued, is provided by Agree. Here it is pretty clear how the data go: 'Janet and John agreed that it was raining' sounds infelicitous. Similarly, if Janet at her location said 'It is raining' and John said 'It is not raining', the claim 'They disagreed about whether it was raining' sounds utterly infelicitous. (Note the following contrast: standardly, if John said 'Bill is dancing' and Janet said 'Bill is not dancing', then, whatever Janet's and John's beliefs about where Bill is, we can say 'Janet and John disagree about whether Bill is dancing'.) This suggests that we treat the felicity of 'Janet and John said that it was raining' not by positing thin semantic values as the objects of thought and talk but instead by the kind of lambda-abstraction technique described earlier. One natural way to implement that here would be to treat the semantic structure of 'Janet and John said that it was raining' as:

Janet and John λx (x said that it was raining at fx)

where f picks out a function from a person to the location of that person.[53]

The data about the felicity of agreement/disagreement reports militate strongly against a Kaplanian approach to location. The view our tests recommend is far more conservative and thoroughly in accord with the Simple View: 'It is raining' is context dependent; at a context, it expresses a proposition about a particular location.[54]

[53] Recalling a point made earlier, note that this approach would predict that it would be far less easy to hear 'Janet and John believe it is raining' when Janet sincerely utters 'It is raining' intending to talk not about her location but as an answer to 'What is going on in Boston' and John intends to be talking about his own location. And, in confirmation of this, informants do find it much harder to hear 'Janet and John both believe that it is raining' as felicitous in this setting.

[54] This is rough. We are happy to allow contexts either where the location is very large or else where there is no locational restriction at all. For more on this point, see Cappelen and Hawthorne (2007).

A similar pattern of data emerges in connection with tense. Suppose John says 'Bill had died' in answer to the question 'Why did Bill not show up at the pub last week?' and Janet says 'Bill hadn't died' in answer to the question 'Why did Bill's children not get their inheritance last year?' The claim 'Janet and John disagreed about whether Bill had died' is clearly infelicitous.[55,56]

Consider similarly a case where Bill (sincerely) said two days ago 'It is raining in Boston' and Janet (sincerely) said two weeks ago 'It is raining in Boston'. Someone in the grip of the reporting argument might think that the felicity of 'They both believed it was raining in Boston' and 'They both said it was raining in Boston' is strong evidence in favour of the Kaplan view. Once we have outgrown the reporting argument, we will see, by contrast, that the unacceptability of 'Janet and John agreed that it was raining in Boston' is powerful evidence against the Kaplanian approach (similarly for the disagreement report in a case where one says 'It is not raining'). We invite the reader to test the framework we have adumbrated against more data involving tensed sentences. We predict that the cumulative effect of the data will be overwhelmingly negative *vis-à-vis* the Kaplanian approach. In sum, the semantic approach to tense that so inspired contemporary relativists is one that does not seem sustainable. It ought to give way to the Simple View.

[55] Of course, if at t Tim says 'Bill had died' (intending to communicate that Bill died before a time that is two weeks prior to t) and at the same time Jim says 'Bill had died' (intending to communicate that Bill died before a time one week prior to t), then there is something that they both agree about—namely, that he had died before t; and this will generate an acceptable reading of 'You both agreed that he had died' in this setting. To see that this is the source of the felicity of the 'agreement' report, change the example so that Janet says 'Bill had died a few days earlier' in response to 'Why was Bill not at the pub a week ago' and John says 'Bill had died a few days earlier' in response to 'Why was Bill not at the pub six weeks ago?' Here 'Janet and John agree that Bill had died a few days earlier' is totally unacceptable.

[56] As Reichenbach noticed, the pluperfect cannot be adequately handled simply by making the time of the utterance part of the content; one needs also to associate a reference time with the 'had'—what he called 'the point of reference'. Kaplan himself focuses on the issue as to whether the time of utterance is part of the content (Reichenbach's 'point of speech') and does not explicitly address the status of the reference time in connection with more complicated tense constructions. (See Reichenbach (1947: 288).)

4

Predicates of Personal Taste

In this chapter we pursue a case study in some detail, that of so-called predicates of personal taste. Our rough-and-ready understanding of this category is that it involves predicates that we ascribe to external objects and events but that express our sensibilities—examples include 'spicy', 'funny', 'disgusting', 'fun', 'delicious', 'nauseating'. Some of these are intuitively more value-laden than others (for example, 'disgusting' is more value-laden than 'spicy'). But we shall not attempt any taxonomy, nor is it important to us to explore whether and to what extent these predicates form a fairly well-defined natural kind.

Predicates of personal taste have attracted quite a bit of attention from relativists recently. This is not surprising. People who make competing judgements about, say, what is disgusting do not seem to be straightforwardly talking past each other; and yet it is also tempting to deny that there is some unitary standard that sets the truth conditions for predications of disgustingness. At first pass, relativism can seem like a pretty attractive option. In what follows we propose to look quite closely at the data that motivate relativists, paying special attention to the competing merits of relativist and contextualist treatments. We agree that those data betray puzzling features that resist easy explanation. Nevertheless, we maintain that little insight is gained into the relevant psychological and semantic mechanisms by moving to a relativistic semantics. Indeed, the case for relativism turns out to be extremely weak once the data have been investigated with sufficient sensitivity.

In Chapters 1, 2, and 3 we used predicates of personal taste and epistemic modals to illustrate the various argumentative strategies used by opponents of Simplicity. We showed how those strategies failed, but Chapter 2 left one door open: the appeal to agreement and disagreement data. This chapter shows that, even for a domain as relativistim-friendly

as that of predicates of personal taste, such data fail to support any kind of anti-Simplicity view.[1]

MOTIVATING RELATIVISM: AGREEMENT, DISAGREEMENT, AND PREDICATES OF PERSONAL TASTE

We have argued that 'say-that' and 'believe-that' reports are surprisingly poor tests for commonality of semantic content, but that judgements of agreement and disagreement supply a rather better heuristic. In this connection, there are some data that offer *prima facie* encouragement to the relativist when it comes to predicates of personal taste. Suppose X says 'Going to the pub is fun' and Y says that, too. Y can happily report 'We agree that going to the pub is fun'. But, as relativists have pointed out, if Y meant that going to the pub was fun for Y, and X meant that it is fun for X, one would not expect the agreement report to be felicitous. That it is felicitous is evidence for commonality of content.

Consider a more dramatic example. We think rotting flesh is disgusting. Suppose there are talking vultures who say 'Rotting flesh is fabulous. There is nothing disgusting about it at all.'[2] The claim 'Those vultures disagree with us about whether rotting flesh is disgusting' sounds pretty acceptable to our ears. By the disagreement test we are given evidence that 'Rotting flesh is disgusting' has the same semantic content in the mouths of both us and the vulture. (*The Outlines of Pyrrhonism* is an excellent source for examples: perfume is unbearable to bees and beetles even though we find it delightful; pigs have fun wallowing in sewage; seawater is delicious for fish; groups differ as to whether sexual intercourse in public, lurid ankle-length clothing, and tattooing babies are disgusting; the same wine is judged dry by those who have just eaten dates, but sweet by those who have just eaten chickpeas.)

[1] We will not, in this book, try to show how epistemic modals can be given a Simplicity-friendly treatment. We refer the reader to Hawthorne (2007).

[2] We make use of this extreme example because the relevant intuitions are starker in that case. Obviously, relativists hope that the force of their position does not significantly diminish when it comes to more mundane examples involving humans with differing tastes.

Of course, even once it is conceded that there is a common content to 'Rotting flesh is disgusting' in the mouths of humans and talking vultures, that does not yet vindicate relativism. But, assuming that we have reason to play the game of broadly truth-conditional semantics as opposed to expressivism, there is now some motivation for relativism. After all, it seems very intuitive to think that there is symmetry between our situation and the vultures'. There would be something bizarrely chauvinistic about claiming that the vulture is wrong, we are right, and leave it at that. The relativist offers a way out of the chauvinism—there is a single content, *Rotting flesh is disgusting*, but it can be evaluated only relative to a standard. Relative to human standards, the proposition is true, but, relative to vulturean standards, it is false. In so far as the relativist has the resources of both a disquotational 'true'/'false' pair and a 'true at'/'false at' pair, he can claim to capture the intuition that the vulture and the human are contradicting each other. After all, the human can say 'What the vulture says is false iff what I said is true'. Meanwhile, he can claim to have avoided chauvinism by downplaying the significance of the fact that the vulture is saying something false: 'Well, I claim that one ought to assert/believe that which is true for one, not that which is true. So it is no significant criticism of the vulture that he says something false, given that he expressed a belief that was true for him.'

Kölbel and others emphasize that the resultant position is one that combines an ascription of disagreement with the denial that any of the relevant parties are at fault (see Kölbel (2002)). This condition of 'faultless disagreement' is one that putatively accords with our intuitions. A claimed central advantage of relativism is that it vindicates this intuition.

In sum, the case for relativism in the arena of predicates for personal taste turns on the idea that agreement and disagreement tests in this case detect semantic values whose fundamental dimension of evaluation is relative to a standards parameter.

We think that this line of argument, though seductive, is in fact far too quick. In what follows we first develop a contextualist approach to predicates of personal taste in some detail. With a decent contextual story in place we return to the relativist account, emphasizing points where relativists have exaggerated or oversimplified the data, and emphasizing respects in which the relativist position looks to be significantly weaker than that of the contextualist.

STEPS TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIST SEMANTICS: 'FILLING'

Let us begin by looking at the predicate 'filling' (as in 'That shepherd's pie was filling').[3] 'Filling' is not a paradigm predicate of personal taste: its tie to physiology is more straightforward than the standard examples. Nonetheless, a number of the key relevant distinctions can be made, with minimal distraction, using that predicate. Moreover, some linguistic intuitions that we wish to marshal are particularly clear-cut in the case of that predicate. Thus we see it as a useful springboard for dealing with discourse about personal taste. Our focus will not be on the underlying syntax of claims about what is filling; it will rather be on displaying some clear and intuitive conceptual distinctions that any semantics for 'filling' ought to respect, with the aim of producing the bare bones of a contextualist story about the truth conditions of claims in which that predicate figures.

Dispositional and Non-Dispositional Uses

There are judgements using 'filling' where the speaker communicates how she was affected on that occasion. 'That omelette I had for breakfast was really filling. I didn't want lunch that day.' But, quite obviously, one can judge that something is filling without being affected (in the relevant way) by it. After all, one can decide not to order something off a menu because one judges it to be filling. There are obviously quite different kinds of *explanans* being invoked in 'I got sleepy because the food I ate was so filling' and 'I was put off ordering anything on the menu because everything on it was so filling'.

The relevant contrast here is similar to that between two uses of 'visible': one can say that something is visible and communicate that it is in view. But there is also a use of visible where one communicates that something would be seen from a certain relevant perspective. Thus we can say that three oak trees are visible from a bedroom of a house even if no one is looking at the trees right now. The relevant perspective can, of course, be shifty. When Clark Kent is selling a piece of real estate, he may say to someone 'Only three trees are visible from the bedroom

[3] Thanks to Adam Sennet for the example of 'filling' and for helpful discussions.

window'. But beings from Krypton can use X-ray vision to see hundreds of trees. In a different context, then, he can say (to a fellow being from Krypton) 'Whether it's day or night, hundreds of trees are visible from that bedroom window'. Any treatment of 'filling' will have to keep track of analogous shiftiness.

Is the dispositional/non-dispositional contrast a semantic contrast? Suppose I assert 'I was able to catch the criminal' in a setting where my central intention is to communicate that I succeeded. It is at least very tempting to appeal to mechanisms of conversational implicature and not semantic variation in order to explain how success (and not merely potentiality for success) is communicated. Similarly for the cases at hand. A full exploration of the matter would take us too far afield. In sketching a contextualist story, we shall, for ease of exposition, assume all uses are, semantically, dispositional.

Let us begin by sketching a contextualist semantics for simple predications. Such a semantics will claim that, on an occasion of use, a predication of 'filling' to some item will tacitly relate that item to a particular individual or group. In the simplest case, a claim of the form 'That is filling', as made by X, where 'that' refers to Y, will express the proposition that Y is filling for X (where the truth conditions turn on how X is disposed with regard to Y).[4,5,6] This account predicts, of course, that there will be pairs of utterances of 'That is filling' and 'That is not filling' that refer to the same thing but that do not in any way contradict each other. And the data certainly bear this out. Suppose a child scoops a cup of leek and potato soup out of a saucepan and says to a friend 'That soup is filling. I can only drink half a cup of it.' Suppose that meanwhile a basketball player scoops a cup and, in

[4] One natural way to implement this proposal, though we certainly do not insist on it, is to posit an unvoiced pronoun at the level of logical form that can pick up on the relevant agent. We say more about this kind of proposal in due course, in the context of discussing recent work by Tamina Stephenson.

[5] Something that we will not dwell on is the difference between 'filling' as applied to stuff and as applied to particular quantities of food ('Trifle is filling' versus 'That bowl of trifle is filling'). When one predicates it of a stuff F, one's judgement about whether F is filling is tied, roughly, to whether it takes a lot or a little to fill a person up. It is thus tied, in part, to rough-and-ready assessments as to what, for various kinds of food, counts as a lot or a little.

[6] One might add extra dimensions of refinement to reflect the fact that 'filling' is a comparative adjective and as such will have a scale associated with it by speaker. A natural gloss on this connection is that to be filling is (roughly speaking) to be filling to an appropriate degree, where propriety is set by context. For a story along these lines, see Glanzberg (2007).

a separate conversation, says 'That soup isn't very filling. I'm going to need something else to fill me up after this.' We don't have any sense of contradiction whatsoever in this case.

Exocentric and Autocentric Uses

When a person predicates 'filling' of an object, the person to whom the object is tacitly being related need not be the speaker himself: sometimes we use someone else's sensibilities as the operative perspective. (This points to ways that predicates of personal taste are like 'left', 'nearby', and 'local'—the operative setting on the parameter need not be given by the location/orientation/sensibilities of the speaker himself.) Suppose X turns to a child and says 'Remember: the leek and potato soup will be very filling'. It is irrelevant whether the soup will be filling to X. What matters is that the soup will be filling to the child. The contrast here lines up with what Peter Lasersohn (2005) calls 'autocentric' versus 'exocentric' uses of taste vocabulary. We shall adopt his terminology in what follows. In a contextualist setting, we can say that use of a taste predicate is autocentric iff its truth conditions are given by a completion that indexes the predicate to the speaker. Thus, a speaker says 'That is filling' autocentrically iff its truth conditions are given by the claim 'That is filling to me' in the mouth of the speaker. Meanwhile, a use is exocentric iff its truth conditions are given by a completion that indexes it to a person or group other than the speaker, which may, however, include the speaker. (Obviously, the autocentric/exocentric distinction will get a slightly different gloss in a relativist setting. But more on that later.)

The contextualist account predicts that there can be straightforward compatibility between the claims made by a person who issues superficially contradictory verdicts when a shift occurs from an autocentric to an exocentric use of the vocabulary (to a group that does not include the speaker).[7] And the data bear this out very well. Suppose X says to a friend 'The leek and potato soup won't be very filling'. A little later, in a different conversation, X says to a small child 'Remember: the leek

[7] While we will not be devoting a great deal of attention to epistemic modals, it is worth noting that there is a similar contrast between autocentric and exocentric uses of epistemic modals. If I see Sally hiding on a bus then I might in a suitable context say 'She is hiding because I might be on the bus' even though I know perfectly well that I am not on the bus. ('Must' is harder to use exocentrically, though we shall not undertake to explain this here.)

and potato soup will be filling'. We do not have any sense at all that the person has changed his mind, nor, relatedly, that the earlier assertion clashes with the later one.

Bound Uses and Speech Reports

So far, everything is in order as far as the contextualist is concerned, so long as she is careful to allow for the flexibility between exocentric and autocentric uses. Let us turn to some other kinds of constructions.

Note first that there seem to be 'bound' uses of the relevant vocabulary. If someone says 'Everyone will find the soup filling', there is no particular individual X or group of Xs such that everyone will find the soup filling for that very X or for that very group of Xs. The relevant reading is *that everyone X will find the soup filling for X*. This kind of binding phenomenon is perfectly common for context-sensitive vocabulary—we see it in the relevant readings of 'Everyone turned left', 'Everyone went to a local bar', and 'Everyone has at least one enemy'.

Let us turn next to attitude ascriptions and speech-act reports. If X says, autocentrically, 'The soup is filling', it is easy to felicitously report 'X said that the soup was filling' and (assuming X was sincere) 'X believed that the soup was filling'. But, as Chapter 2 made clear, this easiness of ascription creates no strain at all for the contextualist, no more than such easiness made trouble for contextualism about 'local' and 'left': it is easy to exploit the flexibility in the tacit subject index.[8]

'Filling' and *De Se* Attitudes

Certain attitude reports involving taste vocabulary have a distinctively *de se* character.[9] Suppose Jones has partial amnesia but does remember someone called 'Big Boy' who complained that a certain meal was 'not very filling'. Yet when asked 'Was that meal filling?', Jones says 'I know I was served that meal, too, but I can't remember how filling it was'. Suppose in fact that Jones's nickname used to be 'Big Boy' and so his memory of Big Boy is a memory of a person identical to himself. Still

[8] An analogous structure explains the easiness of disquotational reports using epistemic modals.

[9] A thought about oneself is *de se* iff one thinks about oneself as oneself. This contrasts with cases where one thinks that some object X is F and one is identical to X but does not realize that one is identical to X.

the claim 'Jones thinks that the meal was filling' sounds infelicitous in a standard context, even when we—the ascribers—are fully informed. Consider now a contextualist semantics that construed the ascription as being of the form 'Jones thinks that the meal was filling for X', where 'X' refers to Jones, and with no constraint on the mode of presentation of the referent of 'X'. The data just presented will make trouble for that account unless a compelling non-semantic explanation of the relevant infelicity is available.

The phenomenon in question extends to absolutely standard context-sensitive constructions. The claim 'Jones thinks that a local bar has a red turret' is infelicitous on its most natural construal, if, in the absence of any relevant *de se* attitude, Jones spots himself and a proximate bar with a red turret through what he believes is a telescope without realizing whom it is that he is looking at. (Similar points can be made about 'He wants to turn left' and 'He thinks an enemy is about to attack him'.) Unless relativism is to be promoted for 'enemy', 'local', and 'left', the *de se* requirement cannot be used to leverage relativism in the current context.

It is also worth remarking that there are lots of contexts of use where, intuitively, there is a *de se* mode of presentation requirement associated with an overt third-person pronoun. Thus, it is easy to imagine a context where 'He knows his pants are on fire' is infelicitous if the subject of the ascription has spotted someone who is in fact identical with himself and whose pants are on fire, but the subject is unaware who the person is.

The question of how *de se* requirements are associated with covert and overt pronouns—and whether such requirements are semantic or pragmatic—is a delicate one, taking us far beyond the scope of this work. But, given that the relevant phenomena proliferate in settings where a relativist treatment is unappetizing, we doubt that much mileage against a contextualist perspective can be achieved by exploiting theoretical uncertainties about the *de se*.[10,11]

[10] For discussion about the relevant *de se* phenomena, see Higginbotham (2003) and Safir (2004).

[11] Similar points apply to Lasersohn's remarks about the verb 'consider' (Lasersohn forthcoming). He notices that this verb tends to induce a *de se* reading and, correspondingly, tends to prohibit an exocentric reading. 'I consider that cake very filling' is indeed hard to read exocentrically. This feature of 'consider' extends to 'local' and 'enemy': 'I consider him an enemy' and 'I consider that a local bar' are equally hard to read exocentrically. So one can get relativist mileage out of 'consider' only in so far as one tries to extend it in far more global directions. Notice, moreover, that it is easy to overstate the data here. We can far more easily get an exocentric reading for 'I consider that bar of

'Filling' Generics

Sometimes our judgements about fillingness are about a particular object. But often they involve generic generalizations about a type of object: 'Trifle is filling'; 'Triple-decker club sandwiches are filling'; and so on.[12] To avoid distraction and misunderstanding, it is important to be clear about certain basic features of these generic uses.

Suppose someone says 'The meals at Giorgione's Palace were filling'. This is a generic claim about meals at a certain restaurant. Thus, assuming orthodoxy about generics, it will tolerate exceptions.

The contextualist account we are in the process of sketching would naturally predict that there is flexibility in the pertinent group. Thus, for example, the availability of exocentric uses entails that the pertinent individual/group for 'The meals at Giorgione's Palace were filling' need not be the speaker. It may include, but not be limited to, the speaker. It may also be a group that excludes the speaker. The contextualist approach being sketched predicts a use where the relevant group is, for example, the set of conversational participants, and where, even if the meals were always filling for the speaker, his speech can come out false. Suppose I say 'The meals at Giorgione's Palace were filling' and the interlocutor responds 'No they weren't. They filled you up only because you have a particularly small appetite, but the rest of us were always left hungry.' Now, if the speaker originally meant to be talking just

chocolate too filling' (we can imagine saying this to a child). We can also get exocentric readings when a predicate of personal taste is not the focus selected by 'consider' as in 'I consider those people who eat one filling meal after another to be gluttons'.

[12] Assuming dispositional truth conditions, it is also arguable that generic elements are in play—though more subtly—with ascriptions to a single object at a single time. Suppose you say 'Three trees are visible from the house' at a time when no one is actually looking at the trees. If the relevant perspective is broadly specified—say, 'adult human', then we cannot construe this as claiming that *anyone* with the relevant perspective would be able to see three trees from the window. After all, the human may be blind, may have defective sight, may be unusually tall, and so on. One way of fixing for this is to suppose that the relevant perspective is very precise—'adult sighted human of usual height . . .'. Obviously, this is silently articulated—the idea would be that (*modulo* acceptable vagueness) facts about the context fix the perspective that is relevant for non-dispositional uses of 'visible', 'filling', and so on, in a way that does allow exceptionless generalizations of the form 'Anyone with the relevant perspective . . .'. Another way of fixing for the problem at hand, however, is to make the content tacitly generic. On this proposal, the above sentence means, roughly, '(Generically speaking) Adult humans would be able to see three trees from the window'. We allow it as an interesting possibility that, in this way, there is significant involvement of generic elements in the dispositional truth conditions.

about himself, he can stick to his guns and clarify the original remark without retraction: 'I only meant that they were filling for me.' But, if he meant to be talking about the group, then, in so far as he accepts the information being proffered, he will retract the original assertion. For example: 'Fair enough. I hope you at least agree that their Sunday Brunch was filling.' And, indeed, both kinds of continuations—retraction and obstinacy—are perfectly natural, given suitable background facts.

What especially bears emphasis is that the truth conditions of generics are unclear, and may be quite complex. In particular, it is far from clear that we can say in general that a generic generalization of the form 'Fs are Gs' is true iff most Fs are Gs, as many of the more simple-minded discussions of generics would imply. Sarah-Jane Leslie (2007*a*) details some factors that impact our felicity judgements: whether the property ascribed is striking ('Sharks attack bathers' sounds acceptable, even though only few in fact do); whether the property ascribed belongs to one of the basic modes of classification that we use for a kind ('Birds lay eggs' is fine, even if most birds are male, so long as birds do not also have another mode of reproduction);[13] and so on.

These and other complexities make reflective evaluation of generics involving predicates of personal taste very difficult. Suppose I say 'Board games are exciting'. Suppose it is true that, even for me, there are plenty of board games that are not exciting, though most of the ones that I actually bother playing are ones that I find exciting. Should we evaluate the claim as false and put it down to exaggeration? Should we try to defend it by drawing analogies with well-known examples like 'Dutchmen are good sailors'? (The latter can arguably be true, even though most Dutchmen do not sail, and even though there are quite a few who do sail who are not very good.) We shall not attempt to settle such questions here.

In part because of the unclarities mentioned, it is easy for disputes over generics to be rather undisciplined. X says 'Englishmen are good footballers'. B says 'But the players on Leeds United are awful and they are English'. A then makes an excuse about those players and maintains the claim. In a dispute like this there is considerable vagueness as to what counts as a decisive counterexample.

We are not going to try to speak to the relevant problems about generics here. We merely record the fact that, in so far as generic elements are in play, claims about 'filling' will inherit the kinds of

[13] She calls these modes 'characteristic dimensions' (Leslie 2007*a*: 384).

unclarity and ill-discipline that infect generic claims, phenomena that are not to be accounted for by some special semantics for 'filling'. And, given these facts, it is especially important not to let generic sentences be used as the key data in settling debates between contextualists and relativists.

So far we have found no deep problem for the contextualist about 'filling'. Indeed, we know of no data that are especially problematic for a contextualism developed along the lines suggested.

'FUN'

Let us now turn to 'fun'. Interestingly, 'fun' seems to fit the mould of 'filling' pretty well. Much of the data introduced by 'fun' patterns with 'filling', so there is little to embarrass an analogous kind of contextualism for 'fun'. Let us underscore a few points in this connection.

There are a range of simple affirmations and denials of fun concerning some particular event that can be handled very smoothly by a contextualist account that proceeds along the lines sketched, where each particular use is indexed to a particular individual (or group). It bears emphasis in this connection that there are plenty of cases where one of a pair of people says 'That is fun' and the other, referring to the same thing, says 'That is not fun', but where we have *no significant intuition of contradiction* between the two assertions. Suppose a caterer says of a certain party 'That party is not going to be fun. I have to cook *hors d'oeuvres* all night.' Suppose that, meanwhile, someone in a separate conversation says of the same party 'That party is going to be fun. I get to meet lots of school buddies that I haven't seen in a long time.' In this case we have absolutely no strong sense at all that the people are in disagreement. Another example: a child says 'The summer is going to be fun. I get to go to music camp.' A parent, in a separate conversation, says, 'The summer isn't going to be fun. I have to work overtime to pay for my child's music camp.' Once again, it would be silly to claim that there is a contradiction between the two speeches.[14]

[14] We were surprised to discover that many audience members wanted to handle the 'summer' example by positing a different referent for 'the summer' across the speeches, thereby obviating the need for appealing to contextualism about 'fun' to explain the perceived lack of disagreement. For this strategy to be helpful, it would have to be applied

To reinforce our sense that there is no disagreement, it is worth reminding ourselves about the following points about these cases. First, it would be altogether appropriate for the child to turn to the parent and say (exocentrically) 'I know the summer won't be fun because you have to work such long hours, but it will be worth it'. If a little earlier the child had said 'The summer is going to be fun!', we would hardly think that this is evidence that he has changed his mind. But what he says by the second speech affirms just what the parent would claim by 'The summer is not going to be fun'. If the speech by the child to the parent is not evidence that he has changed his mind, then the speech by the parent is obviously not evidence that he is contradicting the child. Second, it would be very strange for the parent to exclaim 'That's not true!' were she to eavesdrop on the child and overhear him saying 'The summer is going to be fun'.

Now obviously we still do have intuitions of contradiction in a case where one person says 'That will be fun' and a second person says 'No. That will not be fun'. After all, it would be inappropriate to say 'No' as an interlocutor if one did not intend to be correcting the speaker. This is not troubling for the contextualist. The contextualist should predict different versions of an exchange like this. Here are three versions (there are others):

(i) The speaker is using 'fun' autocentrically, the hearer realizes this, but exocentrically points out that the relevant event will not be fun for the original speaker.

(ii) The speaker is claiming that the referent of 'that' will be fun for a group that includes the interlocutor. While it will be fun for the speaker, it will not be fun for certain other members of the group. Here the interlocutor is quite within his rights to correct the speaker. Once corrected, the speaker will in that case not

systematically to other examples. But it looks wildly implausible to do so. For example, it is not at all plausible to suppose that 'the party' has varying referents across the speeches that figure in the previous example. (In case this is not already completely obvious to every reader, it may be worth reflecting on the naturalness of such exchanges as the following: A: 'The party wasn't fun. I had to cook *hors d'oeuvres* all night. What did you think about it?' B: 'I loved it. Sorry it wasn't so good for you.' The idea that each is talking about a different event does not square with the co-referentiality secured by 'it'.) Note also that a relativist should be wary of attempts to postulate fine-grained referents in these kinds of cases. Remember, relativism is motivated by cases where, allegedly, there is common content (hence a common subject matter); any *general* attempt to argue that there is no common subject matter in the kinds of cases we appeal to here could easily backfire for the relativist.

stick to his guns unless he feels the alleged counterevidence is faulty.[15]

(iii) The original speaker was in fact merely expressing the claim concerning the referent of 'that' that it will be fun for him. The interlocutor misunderstands the speaker and corrects him when it is not appropriate to do so.[16]

Generic Uses of 'Fun' and Correction Data

Let us now reflect on generic uses of 'fun'. For reasons pointed out in connection with 'filling', we should be careful not to ignore the difference between the claim 'That roller coaster ride was fun' and 'Riding roller coasters is fun'. The second involves generic quantification over episodes of riding roller coasters. Even if 'fun' is used autocentrically in both cases, we should expect different patterns of intuitions when generic quantification is in play. Lasersohn (2005: 654) notes that it is odd to say:

This is not fun at all even though I am having fun doing it.

But note that similar speeches are not so odd when one is not talking about a particular episode but where generic quantification is

[15] Notice that, whichever scenario is in play, there seems to be some good sense in which we can say that the interlocutor is disagreeing with the speaker. This is not unexpected. Recall from Chapter 2 that we distinguished a few different senses of 'disagree'. In one sense disagreement is an event that requires interaction between the disagreeing parties. And in that sense, as we noted, one can count as disagreeing with the other party even if one misunderstands what the other party is saying.

[16] Here is an illustration of (iii). In fact, A and B are going on a certain cruise, though A thinks B is not going on it (and B does not know A thinks this). A knows the cruise will be fun for him. B thinks the cruise will not be fun for him (B, that is). A goes up to B and says 'The cruise will be fun'. Since B is going on the cruise, it is natural for B to hear A as talking about a group that includes B (most obviously, the group consisting of A and B). (This is no different from 'filling'. If A and B are both going to eat a meal and A says out of the blue 'The meal will be filling', then it is at least eminently natural for B to hear the relevant group as one that includes B.) Meanwhile, A thinks B is not going on the cruise, is talking about himself, and expects B to realize that. The result: A speaks the truth, B misunderstands, and B utters 'No' inappropriately. Of course, if A had signalled the autocentric use then B would not have responded that way. So, for example, if A had not used 'The cruise will be fun' discourse-initially, but had instead prefaced that assertion with 'I normally go on a cruise with so-and-so, which is a drag. But this time I am going with so-and-so. So this time, the cruise will be fun', then it would be *altogether unnatural* for B to respond 'No, you are wrong. The cruise won't be fun.'

in play. Thus, the following speeches are all acceptable in suitable contexts.

> I know that riding roller coasters is fun. The only reason that I'm not having fun on the Big Dipper today is that I've got a splitting headache/I didn't get any sleep last night.
>
> Riding roller coasters is not fun. The only reason that I'm having fun on this occasion is that I'm on drugs/am on a great date . . .[17]

Relatedly, in so far as generic quantifiers are in play, we will not think that a speaker has first-person authority over his 'fun' judgements, even if 'fun' is used autocentrically. After all, the speaker might be out of touch with the general pattern of his reactions to an episode of a certain type. It is very easy, for example, to imagine corrections of the following sort, even where it is explicit that the speaker is talking about what is fun for himself:

> 'Going to Italian restaurants is fun for me.'
> 'That's not true. You only enjoy them when they serve pizza. Otherwise you just complain and have a rotten time.'
>
> 'Riding roller coasters is fun for me.'
> 'That's not true. Most of the time you get scared and have a terrible time.'

Relativism-driven literature on predicates of personal taste sometimes caricatures the contextualist as one who will regard 'fun' judgements as immune to correction (except in the special case where a person lacks access to his current mental life). We have seen that this is far from the case. Non-autocentric judgements are quite obviously not immune. And even autocentric ones are highly correctable for generic uses.[18]

[17] To the extent that certain speeches like this sound a little strange to you, this is because—as has often been noted—it is often a little odd to note exceptions to a generic generalization right on the heels of making it.

[18] One feature of note is that we may be surprisingly quick to make generic claims using predicates of personal taste on the basis of single encounters. A proper understanding of these phenomena needs to take stock of the way that our psychological mechanisms for generating generic judgements tend to operate. Leslie cites experimental work in psychology that demonstrates a remarkable proclivity to project from a single case when it comes to certain kinds of generic judgements (Leslie 2007*a*: 384). This is obviously relevant to why we are so inclined to trust the authority of our own reactions when making personal-taste generic judgements whose truth conditions far transcend those reactions.

More on Generics and Disagreement

We want to emphasize one final point about generics: the literature tends to proceed as if we generally intuit a disagreement when one person utters a generic claim of the sort 'Fs are fun' (or 'Doing G is fun') and another person utters 'Fs are not fun' (or 'Doing G is not fun'). But this is just not right. It is not hard at all to come up with cases where two people utter a pair of judgements of this form, but there is no sense of disagreement between them. Suppose, for example, that a child lives in town x. In town x the way to go from his house to the grocery store is by monorail. Since he really likes the monorail, he says 'Going to get groceries is fun'. In town y one has to trek three miles through the jungle to get to a grocery store. A child in that town, who hates long treks through the jungle, says 'Going to get groceries is not fun'. We do not think that they disagree—the claim 'They disagree about whether going to get groceries is fun' does not sound very good to our ear. Consider, similarly, a (talking) cat who for well-known reasons finds sex painful and a human who does not. The cat says 'Sex is not fun'. We do not think of ourselves as disagreeing with the cat.[19] Of course, this does not show that contextualism is right for predicates of personal taste. But these cases do remind us that one would simply be inventing data were one to pretend that even a pair consisting of a generic claim about personal taste and its negation always sounds like a case of disagreement/contradiction.[20]

More generally, we recommend that relativists about 'fun' try to find arguments for their view that do not crucially trade on generic sentences. We have been disturbed to find that most of the key examples in the relativist literature that involve 'fun' have been generic, and suspect, for this reason, and that relativists have illicitly tried to cash in on our unclarity described earlier about generic sentences.[21]

[19] One natural way to implement contextualism here is to posit different restrictors on the events quantified over by the generic.

[20] How about cases where this is, intuitively, a genuine disagreement concerning some generic claim about fun? What exactly settles such disputes? As already remarked, a satisfying answer to this question would have to explore the truth conditions of generics in some details. We avoid that minefield here, merely remarking that one ought to be careful not to let a simple-minded understanding of generics drive one away from contextualism towards relativism.

[21] Note that the dispositional/non-dispositional contrast noted earlier applies to 'fun'. If I say 'There are lots of fun puzzles in the book', it may be that no one has yet had fun engaging with those puzzles, and it may even be that no one ever gets to have fun

'DISGUSTING'

We think it is extremely difficult to generate examples that will be troubling to a contextualist about 'filling' or 'fun'. Those who claim to identify examples are often either working with an excessively simple-minded version of contextualism or else forgetting the vicissitudes of generics. Let us turn to another predicate of personal taste that has been discussed in the literature, 'disgusting'. In conversation some found it a particularly compelling case for relativism—one a little more resistant to contextualist therapy than 'fun'—and so it seems like a worthy case study.[22]

There are uses of 'disgusting' that are strongly tied to gustatory sensation. Such uses include direct predications of the way something tastes—'The way this tastes to me is disgusting'—and also applications to objects that are grounded in how they taste—'When I was pregnant, ice cream was disgusting'.[23] But there are also myriad uses that have no straightforward gustatory tie but that are still tied to a physical disgust reaction—with its stereotypical facial expression (as noted in Darwin (1872)). Finally there are uses that express moral evaluation. (Think of the contrast between someone who says that some ice cream is disgusting because of how it tastes, another who says it is disgusting because it has human hair in it, and finally a vegan who says it is disgusting on account of the fact that it involves animal exploitation.) In what follows we focus on the broad category of cases tied to physical disgust. (For the moral case, the discussion would take us from the topic of predicates of personal taste to the topic of moral realism. Note that the phenomenology of 'no-fault disagreement' is not even *prima facie* present in the moral cases.)

('It's a pity the book was burnt. It was the only copy and it had lots of fun puzzles in it. It's a shame no one ever got to try to solve them'). One is thus expressing a dispositional thought. The contextualist needs to recognize this, but doing so raises no special problems of principle.

[22] One superficial contrast between 'disgusting' and 'fun' is that, while it is acceptable to say something of the form 'X is fun for Jones', it is less acceptable to say something of the form 'X is disgusting for Jones'. However, prepositional phrases of the form 'to Jones' do seem to attach felicitously to 'disgusting', though less so for 'fun'. There is thus a contrast between prepositional phrase selection, but that in itself does not get us very far.

[23] Thanks to Dylan Dodd for the example.

Here is a contrast between 'disgust' predications and standard 'fun' predications: if we think that a quantity of soup is made out of sheep's eyes, we may be disgusted and say 'That soup is disgusting'. But if it is in fact ordinary Heinz tomato soup, then we are wrong. Similarly, if everyone in the world is under the same illusion and says 'That is disgusting', then they are all, intuitively, wrong. By contrast, if I say 'Getting my friends to drink that soup was fun', then what is said is not made false by the fact that my enjoyment of the event was grounded in an illusion. This already indicates that, in so far as claims about disgustingness are true or false, their truth value will transcend statistical facts concerning reactions of disgustingness among individuals. Claims about disgustingness are more heavily normative: if one ought not to find *x* disgusting, then *x* is not disgusting. (By contrast, some episode may have been fun even though one ought not to have found it fun. In so far as we are contextualist about 'disgusting', some additional subtlety is called for. We shall not undertake to provide a systematic contextualist semantics for 'disgusting'. What we will do is indicate why we do not think that there is ultimately much to encourage the relativist here.

There is no doubt that some think that the data about disgustingness claims will be highly resistant to contextualist treatment and highly conducive to a relativistic treatment. So let us look carefully at the relevant data and see if that judgement is sustainable. Suppose Vinnie the talking vulture looks at some rotting flesh and explains: 'That's fabulous stuff. There's nothing disgusting about it at all.' Jones, a human, looks at it and exclaims 'That's disgusting!'. A number of informants were inclined to the judgement 'Jones and the vulture disagree about whether that rotting flesh is disgusting'. Our discussion so far does not explain why we find it acceptable to say this, given that it seems fairly clear that the vulture and Jones have sensibilities that are quite alien to each other, and so any reasonable version of contextualism will have them talking past one another. Of course, if the vulture and Jones were talking to each other, then the judgement would be perfectly understandable. As we noted earlier, there is a use of 'agree' according to which Vinnie would be disagreeing with Jones if Vinnie claimed 'No, it's not disgusting', whether or not he had correctly understood Jones's original remark. Also relevant is the fact that, if X and Y are having a debate concerning what is disgusting, then it will be a presupposition of the conversation that there is some single standard governing 'disgusting' as it figures in the debate. In so far as informants witnessing the debate

charitably assume that the conversation is not highly defective (on account of being grounded in false presuppositions), they will assume that the protagonists are not talking past one another and hence that they are in the presence of genuine disagreement.

It is, to be sure, particularly easy to get the intuition that Vinnie and Jones disagree when they engage in interactive behaviour where one of them explicitly contests the other's claim. However, the relevant intuitions are not confined to cases where they interact. Imagine the vulture all alone in the desert talking to itself about how great rotting flesh is and a human in a fancy restaurant talking about how disgusting rotting flesh is. Still, quite a few informants that imagined themselves as third-party observers found it acceptable to say 'Vinnie and Jones disagree as to whether rotting flesh is disgusting'. Yet it seems that the contextualist would predict that this judgement is unacceptable.

Some may be frustrated by talking animal examples here, especially given the evidence that disgust reactions are confined to human beings.[24] So let us supplement the example with a few real-life cross-cultural cases. Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley note that some human cultures find kissing disgusting 'in all cases' owing to a disgust at the exchange of bodily fluids that is induced by kissing (see Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley (2000: 647)). Suppose Tim and Ana kiss. Tim says 'Nothing disgusting about that'. An alien onlooker from the relevant culture, agape, exclaims 'That's disgusting!' Some informants are inclined to say that Tim and the onlooker disagree about whether what Tim did is disgusting. Pursuing the theme of saliva sharing, we might also consider a concoction, chica mascada, enjoyed in some cultures, which is produced by a group of people blending their saliva with maize, with the individual outputs beings mixed together in a pot and allowed to ferment. Many Western onlookers are inclined to the judgement 'That's disgusting!' Some will no doubt be inclined to supplement that verdict with a claim of disagreement with this or that chica-loving group.

It may be helpful to look at a contrast case involving 'filling': suppose that a tiger does not find a one-pound T-bone steak very filling at all, but Jones does. Informants were not particularly happy with 'The tiger and the human disagree about whether a one-pound T-bone steak is filling'.[25] Why the contrast between this case and 'disgustingness' cases

[24] Chevalier-Skolnikoff (1973) notes the absence of disgust reactions in monkeys.

[25] Note, though, that it sounds far more acceptable to say 'The tiger and the human can agree that two carcasses' worth of meat is filling'. It is not immediately clear what

described above?[26] The most plausible explanation is presumably this: in the tiger case, there is not much temptation, even among the folk, to think that what is going on is poor performance of a sensibility that, when properly manifested, would converge on our judgements. We do not think 'If only the tiger weren't so screwed up in its perceptions it would realize that the steak is filling'. But, in the case of a range of predicates of personal taste, the folk are primitively tempted towards such a perspective. (To get a sense of the relevant naivety, reflect on how easily ordinary folk are tempted to take a chauvinistic attitude to music from other cultures.) The relevant linguistic intuitions that are slightly awkward for the contextualist to accommodate are, we conjecture, rooted in the fact that these primitive folk perspectives influence those linguistic intuitions. What should the reflective contextualist say, then, in the light of this apparent awkwardness?

The conflict between our primitive practices and the deliverances of reflective judgement often results in confusing, wobbly data. When there is *prima facie* conflict, there are various procedures we can go through that make us question whether the disagreement is real. Many of the relevant reflections are aptly described by Sextus: we reflect on the situation dependence of judgements using a predicate of personal taste—how it is controlled by background factors of depression and elation, intoxication and sobriety, youthfulness, and the various mixtures of humours that shape the contours of our dispositions; we reflect and find it arbitrary to assign a 'power of distorting objects' to one set of background factors and not others.

These Pyrrhonian reflections rarely generate what Sextus advocates: a suspension of judgement. Yet they can, in many cases, remove a sense of disagreement. Let us look at a particularly stark case. We have often witnessed the following kind of chauvinism exercised by people from hot climates. It is 95 degrees, and a person from Arizona overhears someone from Boston say 'This is hot'. The Arizonan, in a fit of primitive machismo, says 'He's totally mistaken. It's not hot at all. He needs to be in Phoenix in the summer. Then he'll know what it really is to be hot.' If one thinks one's own threshold for heat tolerance manifests a kind of superiority, then it is easy to project one's own standards in this way.

proposition is reported as being a proposition that can be agreed upon. For relevant discussion, see Chapter 2.

[26] Note, importantly, that a mechanical relativist treatment of 'filling' and 'disgusting' would have nothing useful to say about this kind of contrast.

But such an attitude is hard to maintain for very long. The force of the relevant Pyrrhonian reflections is not hard to appreciate. And the result is that, in so far as one judges 'It is not hot', one no longer hears the content expressed as in conflict with the Bostonian's speech. Ascription of a mistake to a Bostonian will either be altogether withdrawn or else will have a ring of playfulness (or else will be a self-indulgent means of imposing one's own standards on certain predicates that appear in some conversation[27]). In so far as the original accusation of a mistake was serious, the contextualist will explain the relevant datum by appeal to a dose of semantic blindness: even though the Arizonan does not express the same property by 'hot' as the Bostonian, this is not recognized by the Arizonan's language faculty and, owing to misjudgements about semantic uniformity, some disagreement judgements are accepted when they ought not to be.

It would be surprising indeed for anyone seriously to think that these phenomena concerning 'hot' made serious trouble for contextualism. At worst they show that certain conversations using 'hot' are so highly defective in their presuppositions of semantic uniformity that no semantic value at all can be coherently assigned to 'hot' as it figures in those conversations.

Consider similarly a dispute about whether a certain drink is delicious between a pair of cultures who then discover that their judgements about this and similar drinks is wholly controlled by whether recent consumption of dates or chickpeas has taken place. One culture tends to eat a lot of dates before drinking ovaltine, while the other tends to eat a lot of chickpeas, and the difference in reactions is almost entirely a function of that fact. Having discovered the source of their different reactions, a natural semantic reaction is to give up on the idea of a single controlling sensibility that provides a standard across the cases in favour of more piecemeal sensibilities that generate context-dependent judgements concerning 'delicious'. In particular, *and crucially*, the sense of a disagreement between the cultures will almost entirely evaporate once suitable self-understanding has been achieved.[28]

We do not think that the 'disgusting' cases presented above are interestingly different from the Arizonan 'hot' or the date-eaters' 'delicious'.

[27] For those who know the movie, cf. Crocodile Dundee on knives.

[28] An alternative perspective is one according to which eating dates or chickpeas simply induces one to make false speeches by creating perceptual illusion. The acceptability of speeches of the form 'When I've eaten dates, X's are delicious' is evidence that this diagnosis is not particularly natural.

A few points bear emphasis in this connection. First, there were plenty of informants who even at the outset were uncomfortable about disagreement judgements in a range of disgust cases that we presented. Some people were inclined to judge cat food disgusting when they learned about the variety of innards that are used to make it. But they frequently did not feel comfortable saying they disagreed with the cats who ate it, even on the hypothesis that the cat had a concept of disgustingness but was not disgusted by its food. Having learned that hares eat their own droppings, we asked around whether (on the supposition that hares said to themselves 'Not disgusting!') those who were disgusted thought that they disagreed with the hare. Many were not compelled by this intuition. Those of us who are disgusted at the thought of drinking milk that has hair floating around in it were shaky on disagreement verdicts when imagining talking cats drinking from saucers full of milk that had floating hair in it. Some people are disgusted at the idea of walking around a sewer in bare feet, but few people had any sense of disagreement with talking rats who were not disgusted by a failure to wear shoes when walking in a sewer.

Just as many readers will resist disagreement judgements in certain cases that figure in the above paragraph, so many informants have at best a weak inclination towards disagreement judgements for one or more of the cases presented earlier. Now certainly *moral disgust* judgements provoke very powerful intuitions of disagreement. But when one sticks to cases that lack moral import, the phenomenology of disagreement is far weaker. In sum, then, the disagreement data for physical-disgust judgements can easily be overstated. In a large range of cases, the relevant verdicts are often fairly weak or are not present at all.

A second theme bears emphasis. We invite readers to dwell on the outputs of Pyrrhonian reflections on disgust verdicts. Suppose we feel physical disgust at the chica-lovers. We reflect on the fact that those who are disgusted at kissers are playing out similar root tendencies that take a slightly different form. We reflect on the fact that, while disgust reactions arguably have an evolutionary purpose, they take on a life of their own, assuming different profiles in different cultures. We then reflect on the fact that there is nothing interesting to say by way of health hazards or whatever to render the chica mascada practices problematic in a way that kissing is not. Certainly, the output of these reflections is to lose all sense of any deep objectivity of the physical disgust verdicts and, correlatively, any strong sense that one is doing better by getting disgusted at chica mascada rather than kissing. It also seems to us that a

correlate of these reflections is to lose any strong sense of disagreement. Even initially it is hard for many people to feel that they disagree with a talking rat who is not disgusted by people walking barefoot in sewers. A disagreement judgement here is not more tempting than it is in a case where a rat finds rat pellets delicious to eat but humans do not. By reflecting enough on the chica case, one's sense of disagreement diminishes to the vanishingly low levels of the barefoot rat or pellet cases.[29]

None of this is very comforting to the relativist. The fact that, in many of these cases, disagreement verdicts are weak to begin with is not predicted by a relativist semantics that wants a blank 'no-fault disagreement' approach to phenomena of this kind. And the fact that disagreement intuitions subside as 'no-fault' intuitions gain ground is hardly encouraging for the relativist who wants the former to sit happily alongside the latter. We all agree that it would be juvenile to propose revolutionary changes in semantics in response to Arizonan machismo about heat. And we presume that nearly all of us would agree that a revolution would scarcely be better motivated by observing that cats find mice delicious, or by a real-life example of the chickpea- or date-primed Ovaltine drinkers. Are the data really much better in the case of physical disgust? We do not think so.

Thus ends our barebones defence of contextualism about predicates of personal taste. A confession is in order, however. Suppose one emerges from one's Pyrrhonian reflections with no powerful relativist axe to grind. Still, there is no easy recipe for the right contextualist semantics.[30] The distinction between cases wherein one of two parties

[29] Of course, even having wavered as to who is or is not in conflict with us, we may persist in the original taste judgement. That we do not typically react to Pyrrhonian reflections by retracting our disgustingness, deliciousness, or tastiness judgements about cases is not particularly surprising—in so far as we treat the content of those judgements as part of our evidence, it is natural to make adjustments elsewhere. The contextualist need not be embarrassed by the fact that, as part of our cognitive make-up, we typically do treat personal taste judgments as part of what we have to go on. Now in some cases the normative sense that the relevant subjects ought not to have found the relevant event physically disgusting is more apt to survive Pyrrhonian reflection. Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley (2000) report that it is not unusual that people are disgusted at the thought of wearing sweaters worn by amputees. Many people we talked to felt that this reaction exemplifies a mean and unacceptable attitude. In cases like this the judgement that the relevant case is not disgusting is quite persistent.

[30] Even the decision between error theory and contextualism is not always straightforward. Consider by analogy the case of simultaneity judgements. Informed by special relativity, we will judge that there is no frame-independent simultaneity relation. We

has a distorted verdict from cases where two parties speak past one another is vague and confusing. We do not pretend otherwise. All that matters for our purposes is that the data on personal taste make far less of a compelling case for relativistic semantics than is commonly supposed.

RELATIVIST APPROACHES TO PREDICATES OF PERSONAL TASTE

Our critique of relativist approaches to personal taste is, in effect, already well under way. After all, once a plausible case for contextualism has been developed, that already takes much of the wind out of the sails of the relativist programme. However, it is worth raising some specific worries about relativist approaches. We have already outlined a relativist approach to personal taste predicates in Chapter 1 and so shall not reproduce it here, though we do wish to underscore certain features about our presumed relativist target:

(i) We shall assume at the outset that the relativist approach in question will take steps two and three outlined in Chapter 1: Disquotation and Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports.

(ii) We shall assume, as one would expect, that the relativist makes use of flexibility in operative points of evaluation to account for exocentric and autocentric uses. On this model, the semantic content of what Jones says is the same whether he says 'There is something tasty around the corner' autocentrically (having spotted a fabulous trifle) or exocentrically (speaking to a vulture after having spotted a carcass). While the operative point of evaluation does not affect semantic content, it does, as one would

then have to decide what to do by way of describing the worldly truth condition of ordinary uses of 'at the same time' from our newly enlightened perspective. We might opt for a contextualism, coupled with the verdict that people are blind to semantic variation of 'at the same time' across contexts. Or we might opt for an error theory according to which the relation expressed by the ordinary 'at the same time' is not instantiated. The choice is far from straightforward, even when the empirical facts are fully in view. Note also that it is conceivable that our linguistic intuitions may lag behind new theoretical discoveries. To the extent that there is 'informational encapsulation' (see Fodor (1983: sect. III.5)), the agreement judgements delivered by the language organ may in some ways be systematically insensitive to new theoretical information.

> expect, affect assertability: 'X is tasty' is assertable in a context only if the content *that X is tasty* is true relative to the point of evaluation that is operative in that context.[31]

With these clarificatory remarks in place, let us turn to criticism. As it turns out, there are a number of serious concerns that can legitimately be raised about the relativist approach, ones that do not similarly afflict the contextualist. Other concerns are less damning for the general relativist approach, but are instructive in that they refute this or that natural version of the approach.

Faulty Predictions of Contradictoriness

One theme that bears emphasis is that blanket relativism about predicates of personal taste generates unacceptable predictions about contradictoriness. This is especially clear for paradigmatically autocentric uses by two people that are not conversationally interacting. Just as we have no intuition of contradictoriness when a child points to the leek and potato soup and says 'That is very filling' while an adult says 'That won't be very filling', so we have no intuition of contradiction when a child says 'The summer will be fun' on account of getting to go to a music camp and a parent, in a separate conversation, says 'The summer won't be fun' on account of having to work overtime to pay for the music camp for the child.[32] A blanket relativist approach will claim that the first expresses the proposition *that the summer will be fun* and the second the proposition *that the summer won't be fun* and, with Disquotation in place, will claim that if what the first says is true then what the second says is false. Further, assuming Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports, the blanket relativist will claim that, if both are being sincere, then one of them has a false belief. Neither of these intuitions is borne out. In the case described, it seems clear, first, that there is no contradictoriness between the assertions and, secondly, that—assuming the relevant empirical facts—both assert something that is straightforwardly true.

[31] While the matter is seldom discussed, we also assume that relativists will take on board the fact that at least some uses of any predicate of personal taste will be dispositional—as discussed above.

[32] Those who like talking-animal examples might reflect on the absence of felt contradictoriness in a case where one of us judges a piece of music or a certain garment sexy and a talking tiger says 'That is not sexy', speaking either of the music or of the garment.

Similar considerations apply if the parent, having in one conversation said autocentrically 'The summer won't be fun', later says exocentrically to the child 'The summer will be fun'. According to a relativist story applied to this sequence, the parent's later claim contradicts the parent's earlier claim, and if one is true the other is false. After all, on that account, we can unequivocally say that the parent asserted both that the summer will be fun and that it won't be, and then apply logic and Disquotation to generate various claims about contradictoriness and/or truth values.

These are all straightforwardly faulty predictions. Now of course the relativist could back off from a blanket approach. He might concede that a contextualist account is appropriate for all sorts of uses but reserve a relativist treatment for some. One kind of more guarded relativist treatment is to be found in Tamina Stephenson's work. She posits two underlying forms for a predication of 'fun'. One form deploys a special index PRO_J that is given a relativist semantics. Thus if I say 'X is fun PRO_J' and you say 'X is fun PRO_J', then our claims have the very same semantic value—*X is fun* $\textit{PRO}_J$—a semantic value that is not true or false *simpliciter*, but instead true relative to a standard. The by-now familiar combination of Disquotation combined with a putatively deeper *true at* ideology is brought to bear on this content. Meanwhile, a second underlying form 'X is fun for x' is proposed, where 'x' picks up on some salient individual. This does not get a relativistic treatment. If someone says 'That was fun' and means 'That was fun for Jones', then no standards relativity afflicts the content. Stephenson proposes that PRO_J uses are all autocentric: exocentric uses call for the non-relativistic style of completion (Stephenson 2007*a*).

This can handle a few of our concerns. Suppose the child says 'The summer will be fun', meaning 'The summer will be fun PRO_J', and then says exocentrically to his parent Y 'The summer will not be fun'. The latter will have the content *the summer will not be fun for Y*, and so the child will not hear the first speech as contradicting the second. However, this does not take us very far in itself. After all, if these were the semantic values then the parent should hear the child's sequence of speeches as in conflict, since 'The summer will be fun PRO_J' will be true for Y, the parent, iff 'The summer will be fun for Y' is true. But the parent will not detect contradiction in the speeches, contrary to what this semantic gloss predicts. Similarly, if autocentric uses of 'The summer will be fun' and 'The summer will not be fun' by the child and parent respectively are interpreted as 'The summer will be fun PRO_J' and 'The summer

will not be fun PRO_J', then it is predicted that any eavesdropper will, if he understands the speeches, hear them as contradictory. But the data do not bear this out.

Now, of course, Stephenson could say that, in the cases in question, the PRO_J content is not in play. In the case imagined, the child expresses the non-relativistic content that the summer will be fun for him, and the parent the non-relativistic content that the summer will be fun for him. On this account some intuitively autocentric uses have PRO_J contents, while others have speaker-indexed contents. But now our puzzlement deepens. All the paradigmatically autocentric uses of 'fun' that we can think of are ones where, as in the child and parent case, the putative data of contradiction are not to be found. So which exactly are the cases using 'fun' where the PRO_J style of content for 'fun' is needed? We await compelling data.

Autocentricity and the Problem of 'Lost Disagreement'

A second theme that is worth emphasizing is that relativists have been far too quick in positing autocentrism in cases where we do intuit a contradiction. Consider a case where someone says 'This curry is spicy' and someone says 'No, you are wrong. Actually, it is not very spicy.' This relativist says, correctly, that we do intuit contradiction here and supposes that the contextualist will have a hard time handling the case. The presumption here is that the contextualist will treat the first remark as tantamount to 'This curry is spicy for me', thus rendering it immune from criticism. And on that construal the criticism by the interlocutor is out of place. This is the alleged problem of 'Lost Disagreement', which according to MacFarlane (2007*a*: 18–19) afflicts the contextualist. Relativists solve the problem by relativization—the content *this curry is spicy* is true for the utterer, false for the interlocutor. With the disquotation step overlaid on this, the interlocutor is then, after all, in a position to say 'That's wrong'.

Both in his vision of the contextualist approach and in his autocentric account of what it is for the sentence to be true for the speaker, the relativist is guilty of an all-too naive understanding of how the predicate 'spicy' works. When one says something of the form 'X is spicy', one transcends the question of whether it is spicy to oneself, and the contextualist will recognize this. Thus, for example, the following speech makes perfect sense: 'I've been eating bland food all year. Even this chicken korma, which is very mild, tastes very spicy to me.' When one

uses 'spicy', one realizes that there are public standards on its application and realizes that, whether a meal tastes spicy to oneself does not settle the question. The above example illustrates a case where one recognizes that an object is not very spicy even though it tastes very spicy to oneself. It is also easy to construct a case where an object does not taste very spicy to oneself but one knows it to be very spicy: 'I've just come back from the dentist. It's weird. Even this chicken vindaloo—which I know to be very spicy—doesn't taste very spicy to me at all with all this anaesthetic in my mouth.' Now, of course, there will be elements of context dependence for 'very spicy'. In a context where one is comparing Tabasco to other hot sauces, one might say 'Tabasco isn't very spicy, but that Armageddon Habanero sauce is'. In another context it would be perfectly reasonable to say 'Tabasco is very spicy'. Moreover, usage may vary yet more significantly across cultures if palates cluster in different ways (and even more obviously across talking species). Thus it is not true that all palates and all 'spicy' conversations will be constitutively relevant to the property expressed by 'spicy' on a particular occasion of use. But that hardly means that the contextualist ought to assimilate 'That is very spicy' to 'That tastes very spicy to me'.[33]

In short, relativists tend to attack a simplistic version of contextualism that no contextualist worth his salt ought to be defending. Worse still, they import certain of those simplistic features into their own relativistic semantics. Thus, suppose that using Stephenson's machinery we interpret 'That is very spicy' as uttered by me in response to a curry encounter as 'That is very spicy PRO_J', and interpret that as being true for a speaker iff the referent tastes very spicy to the speaker. That would not make sense of the following speech: 'I believe this is very spicy. Of course, it may be that I'm wrong. Maybe it's just that I've been eating bland food for a long time.' It is hard to see how to make sense of this kind of tentativeness on the proposed relativistic semantics.

Let us combine the observations of this and the previous section. Consider a case where one speaker says 'That is F' and another says

[33] A foray into questions of how facts about the speaker and his environment together fix a standard (naturally thought of as a threshold on a scale) for 'very spicy' on an occasion of use would require an exploration of metasemantical questions that are far beyond the scope of this work. A simple appeal to speaker intentions will not be the whole story, since the content of 'spicy' intentions will themselves be dependent on myriad context-fixing factors, and since speakers do not in any straightforward sense intentionally put a mark on a scale when they use 'spicy'. (See Glanzberg (2007) for relevant discussion.)

'That is not F', where F is a predicate of personal taste. In cases where F is clearly being used autocentrically in both cases, there is no intuition of disagreement. In cases where we have a clear intuition of disagreement, an autocentric construal is naive. For these reasons, the 'Lost Disagreement' problem for contextualism has been considerably exaggerated. Meanwhile, relativist treatments have been too heavily autocentric.

Non-Relativity of Belief

As far as we can tell, the considerations of the previous two sections are pretty damning for relativistic approaches. But it is also worth investigating some other potential trouble spots for the relativist. In some cases the upshot will be some refinement on the relativist position, while in other cases we will uncover problems that may be of deeper significance.

The Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports step, as we originally stated it, is problematic for the relativist. Let us raise problems for the two salient ways of thinking about that step that we described in Chapter 1.

First try: *for any individual X, X believes that Y is fun at t iff X believes that Y is fun by the standards operative for X at t.* This account predicts that, even if X uses the content exocentrically, X still counts as believing that Y is fun so long as X thinks that *Y is fun* is true at the exocentric standard in use at t. This approach has absurd consequences. Suppose Jones and Smith know that there is rotting flesh in a box. Suppose Jones says autocentrically 'There is something disgusting in the box' while Smith says exocentrically to the vulture 'You will find something that is not disgusting in the box'. The account predicts that we can say unequivocally that Jones believes there is something disgusting in the box and that Smith believes that there is not, and hence that Jones and Smith have contradictory beliefs. This is silly. Consider similarly a case where a parent says 'The summer will not be fun' autocentrically and then 'The summer will be fun' exocentrically. The account under consideration will push us to say that either the parent has changed his mind or else he now has contradictory beliefs. Again, this is an utterly unacceptable result.

Second try: *for any individual X, X believes that Y is fun iff X believes that Y is fun for X.*[34] Note that this version still preserves Non-relativity of

[34] Of course this thesis does not compete with the thesis that X believes that Y is fun iff X stands in the belief relation to the content *that X is fun*. Even on the assumption

belief: while the claim *Y is fun* is only true or false relative to a standard, the claim *X believes that Y is fun* is free from standard relativity. Again, it is not hard to find difficulties with this proposal.

First, it does not do justice to the fact that exocentrism can extend to belief ascriptions.[35] Suppose Jones and Smith disagree about the location of the rotting flesh. Jones thinks it is behind door A, while Smith thinks that it is behind door B. Jones and Smith are talking to Vinnie the vulture. In that setting, it is perfectly natural for Jones to say 'Smith thinks that you will find something delicious behind door B, but I think you won't'. Jones's claim is felicitous in that exocentric content, but the current proposal for securing Non-Relativity of Semantic Value and Belief Reports would render it true iff Smith thinks that the vulture will find something that is delicious for *Smith*.

Secondly, as we have seen, while there is a use of 'fun' that is straightforwardly autocentric, non-gustatory uses of 'disgusting' do not work that way. The felicity of 'That is disgusting' is never straightforwardly determined by whether the referent of 'that' is disgusting to the speaker, not even when the referent is disgusting according to the standards that the speaker endorses. The proposal illicitly assumes that a straightforwardly autocentric use is available for all predicates of personal taste.

Suppose the relativist simply gives up on the non-relativity of belief ascriptions. He would then treat the truth of 'X believes that Y is fun' as varying with standards in the way 'X is fun' does. This view risks giving up on much of what motivates relativists. Suppose, for example, that, just as there is a flexible operative standard for 'Trifle is disgusting', there is also a flexible operative standard for 'Vinnie believes trifle is disgusting'. On the most natural version of the present proposal, the latter claim is true relative to a vulturean standard but false relative to a human standard. But what this means is that in a conversation where the operative standard is human it is not acceptable to say 'Vinnie

that thin contents are suitable *relata* for the belief relation, there are natural questions to ask about when that relation does and does not hold. The two ways of thinking discussed in this section present ways of going about answering such questions.

[35] This is noticed in Lasersohn (forthcoming). Lasersohn claims that 'consider' does 'not lend itself easily' to autocentric descriptions and thus differs from 'believes' in that respect. We are unconvinced. We think it is not so hard to imagine someone who, having done the relevant kind of survey, writes 'I consider Doggiecrunch to be the tastiest dog food on the market', yet we would not thereby impute to him bizarrely canine tastes. See also n. 11 above for discussion of these issues.

believes that trifle is disgusting', and hence not acceptable to say 'Vinnie disagrees with me'; *but this undermines much of the supposed point of the framework*.

A more promising kind of retreat is to embrace the position adopted by Tamina Stephenson. As noted before, she distinguishes two kinds of contents for 'fun': a relativistic 'fun PRO_J' and non-relativistic 'fun for X'. Her view is not that statements of the form 'X believes that Y is fun' always amount to 'X believes that Y is fun for him/herself'. After all, at some contexts, 'X believes that Y is fun' will be of the form 'S believes that S is fun for x', where 'x' gets assigned an object other than S. Hers is rather a slightly more restricted view: in so far as 'X believes that Y is fun' has the underlying form 'X believes that Y is fun PRO_J', then such an ascription is true iff 'X believes that Y is fun for X' is true. This does not handle the second problem above, since it suffers from an excessively autocentric view of the functioning of predicates of personal taste. But her package does handle the first problem very nicely. After all, by her lights, exocentric belief ascriptions do not use the PRO_J structure, and hence they do not make trouble for a thesis of non-relativity for claims of the form 'X believes that Y is fun PRO_J'.

Belief Attribution and Doxastic Alternatives

It is worth highlighting a serious strain in Lasersohn's and Stephenson's account of belief attributions using predicates of personal taste. They present us with the familiar semanticist's picture according to which some possible worlds are belief worlds/doxastic alternatives and others are not. A belief world is a world 'compatible with everything that [the subject] believes' (Lasersohn 2005: 676). A belief world for U is a 'candidate' for the actual world as far as U is concerned. Suppose Vinnie thinks that trifle is disgusting. As Lasersohn and Stephenson develop things, what we learn from this is that all of Vinnie's belief worlds are worlds where trifle is disgusting to him (Lasersohn 2005: 674–8). Now Lasersohn and Stephenson will have their own view about trifle. Suppose they think that trifle is not disgusting. Then they will certainly allow that many of Vinnie's belief worlds are ones in which trifle is not disgusting. (For example, it may turn out that the actual world is one of Vinnie's belief worlds.) But now we have arrived at a very strange result. We are in a situation where we will say both (i) that there are worlds compatible with everything that Vinnie believes where trifle is not disgusting, and (ii) that Vinnie believes that

trifle is disgusting.[36] This is not a happy combination.[37] After all, one of the things Vinnie believes is that trifle is disgusting, and this is incompatible with trifle being not disgusting. It is thus hard to make coherent sense of Lasersohn's and Stephenson's remarks about doxastic alternatives.

Note also that these remarks reveal strong anti-relativist tendencies. Suppose, in an intra-human conversation, that X says 'Rotting flesh is disgusting'. Lasersohn and Stephenson in effect acknowledge that X does not thereby rule out all of Vinnie's doxastic alternatives. But this is just to concede that X's assertion is not incompatible with Vinnie's view about what the world is like. Given that Vinnie is not being insincere when he says 'Rotting flesh is not disgusting', this would seem to imply that X's assertion cannot be incompatible with what Vinnie is saying. But this concession is not compatible with the relativist approach.

Factive Verbs

What does it take for 'X knows that Bill's party will be fun' to be true for Jones? Presumably the relativist will think that, for standard uses, a necessary condition for 'X knows that Bill's party will be fun' to be true for Jones is that 'Bill's party will be fun' be true for Jones, else the inference

Fred knows that Bill's party will be fun

Therefore, Bill's party will be fun

would not be acceptable—but on standard uses it is.

Within Stephenson's system, we can put the point this way. Supposing that the inference uses the logical forms

Fred knows that Bill's party will be fun PRO_J

Therefore, the food at Bill's party will be fun PRO_J

then the premiss will be true for X only if the conclusion is true for X. If the premiss of the original argument did not use the relativistic 'PRO_J',

[36] Using Stephenson's terminology, we can put the worry this way: there are certain possible worlds where trifle is not disgusting PRO_J such that (i) those worlds are among Vinnie's doxastic alternatives and (ii) Vinnie believes that trifle is disgusting PRO_J.

[37] A referee remarked 'Of course, there is nothing odd about this by itself—the worlds in question in (i) might be worlds where trifle tastes like cottage cheese.' Apparently, the referee did not notice our use of 'everything'.

but instead a covert pronoun that referred to Bill, then the inference to the conclusion would be questionable (at least assuming that the conclusion is read as 'the party will be fun PRO_J'). So the fact that the inference is standardly recognized as valid would, within Stephenson's framework, plausibly be grounded in the fact that it standardly has the form displayed above.[38]

Presumably, the relativist will also require that, in so far as the subject X knows that Bill's party will be fun, then Bill's party will be fun for X. After all, the relativist does not want to say that someone knows that a party will be fun if it will not be fun for that person.[39,40]

This set-up yields some strange results. For example, suppose doing maths puzzles is not fun for God but is fun for us. If one is a contextualist, one will happily allow that God can know what we know: the knowledge that we express by 'Doing maths puzzles is fun' is some generic claim or universal claim that is somehow restricted to the activities of a particular community; and this is just the sort of thing God will know about. But the relativist cannot say this. On her view, God has contradictory views to ours, since God thinks doing maths puzzles is not fun but we think it

[38] An advantage of this set-up is that it can allow for exocentric knowledge ascriptions where the relevant inference does not go through. Thus, even though I look forward to a certain party with anticipation, we can say: 'The caterer will have to prepare hundreds of *hors d'oeuvres* during the party. So the caterer knows that the party will not be fun.' In this setting we cannot infer 'the party will not be fun' unless we are in a special context in which that claim is being used exocentrically, in a way that coordinates with the exocentric knowledge ascription.

[39] For another discussion of factivity and relativism, see Stanley (2005: ch. 7).

[40] *Modulo* a few minor qualifications, this framework is endorsed by Lasersohn (forthcoming). In her dissertation, Stephenson claims to have spotted an important difference within the class of factive verbs. On her view, 'recognize' and 'discover' differ in that, while 'Sam recognized that licorice is tasty' requires that licorice be tasty to both Sam and the speaker, 'Last summer Sam discovered that rollerblading was fun' requires only that rollerblading be fun to Sam (Stephenson 2007*a*: 199–201). We think that the contrast has a lot more to do with the predicates 'fun' and 'tasty' than with the verbs 'recognize' and 'discover'. Thus the parent can say 'My child now recognizes that the summer will be fun', having just told the child about music camp, without thereby expressing a view about his own well-being during the summer; meanwhile, 'Sam discovered that licorice is tasty' is naturally heard as committing the speaker to the tastiness of licorice. A final and closely related point about 'recognize': Stephenson claims that 'Sam recognized that rollerblading is fun' commits the speaker to the fun of rollerblading. By our lights, this is not quite right. The sentence is naturally heard as having a generic content in the that-clause and generic contents about fun need not implicate anything about the speaker in a context where it is clear that she is outside its scope. Thus if we consider 'Sally recognized that childbirth is not fun', as said by a man, or 'At an early age cats recognize that chasing mice is fun', as said by a human, Stephenson's intuition no longer has any force.

is. Now, since 'X knows that P' requires that P be true for X, and since 'Maths puzzles are fun' is not true for God, we should deny that God knows that maths puzzles are fun. Since we know it is fun to do maths puzzles, the suggested conclusion is that we know something that God is unable to know—namely, that doing maths puzzles is fun. Similarly, supposing (as seems plausible) that we know that we know that maths puzzles are fun, then the content of 'We know maths puzzles are fun' is known by us but not by God. After all, if God knows that X knows that maths puzzles are fun, then 'X knows that maths puzzles are fun' has to be true for God, which in turn requires that 'Maths puzzles are fun' is true for God. Hence we know that we know that maths puzzles are fun but God does not know that we know this. So there are at least two things that we know that God does not.[41] If only a refutation of omniscience could really come so cheap![42]

It also bears emphasis that this profile for factive verbs does help the cause of those relativists who claim to be able to predict and explain intuitions of 'faultless disagreement'. As Kölbel point out, the thesis of faultless disagreement is not intended as the mere epistemic thesis that each party is perfectly reasonable in their point of view. As Kölbel (forthcoming: 14) insists, the idea is that 'both parties are free of any fault whatsoever (whether or not they can be blamed for it)'. But it seems to us that the relativist should not predict an intuition of 'no fault whatsoever'; nor is he in a position to sustain such a thesis. For one thing, the relativist allows himself disquotational truth predicates. In the case at hand, that will license our insisting that one of the parties to the dispute is speaking the truth and the other is speaking falsely. For a thesis of 'no-fault disagreement' to be sustained, we will have to learn to live with 'There is no fault whatsoever in speaking falsely'. But this is hardly an intuitive speech. Factive verbs deepen the difficulty. For, given the connection between factive verbs and disquotational predicates described above, in so far as one of the disputing parties is in a position properly to assert 'I know that P' in one of these disputes, he will also be in a position to assert 'I know that my position is correct but

[41] In the Stephenson framework, we can put the point this way: the contents *doing maths puzzles is fun* PRO_J and *we know that doing maths puzzles is fun* PRO_J are contents that we know and God cannot know.

[42] We do realize that this objection is not, by itself, going to have sufficient persuasive force to dissuade card-carrying relativists. Nevertheless, we do think that this feature of their view is worth highlighting and that it is an intuitive cost (as well as a theological cost for those relativists who wish to attend church without harbouring heretical thoughts).

my opponent is unable to know that his position is correct'.[43] Similarly, a third party will often be able to assert 'One of them has knowledge and one of them doesn't' in such a case. It seems very strange to combine such an admission with the thesis that in no reasonable sense is one of the parties at fault.

For the record, we do not ourselves find anything very compelling about the purported intuition of faultless disagreement.[44] Cases where the sense of no fault runs deep are ones where the sense of disagreement runs shallow.[45] Given our contextualist orientation, this should not be surprising. What we have been trying to do in the preceding paragraph is push a slightly different theme: the thesis of faultless disagreement, as Kölbel presents it, is not even secured by the relativist's own preferred ideology.

Bound Uses

The relativism sketched so far suggests that each use of 'fun' will have a particular operative point of evaluation, where the assertion will be true for the speaker iff it is true relative to that point of evaluation. This machinery is insufficient to account for bound uses of the sort noticed earlier. Suppose, for example, that I say 'Everyone will do something fun'. This may be felicitous, even though there is no X such that everyone will do something fun for X. Thus, the simple relativist story at least needs to be enriched to handle bound uses. Stephenson has sketched such a story. On her account, as we have seen, the underlying logical form of 'fun' sometimes has a relativistic PRO_J, but sometimes has a non-relativistic 'for X'. Moreover, while PRO_J is not bindable, the pronoun that occurs in the non-relativistic version is bindable. Thus, there is a use of 'Everyone will do something fun' where the underlying form is 'Every X will do something fun for X'.[46] PRO_J does not figure in the bound use: hence the standards parameter drops out and is irrelevant.

[43] Of course, there will be cases where neither side can properly assert 'I know . . .' on account of the fact that both sides are epistemically amiss. But the thesis of no-fault disagreement was hardly tailored for cases where both parties are at fault epistemically.

[44] Glanzberg (2007: 16) is similarly sceptical.

[45] Recall that this theme permeated our discussion of 'disgusting'.

[46] For the record, we are unsure whether there are bound uses of 'disgusting'. That is, we are unsure as to whether there is bound use of 'Everyone will get something disgusting'. This would not be surprising, by our lights, given the contrast between 'fun' and 'disgusting'.

Let us assume that the relativist story has been supplemented in some such way. We wish to point out that, so developed, relativism has untoward results concerning validity. Suppose a person from the class of '84 goes through the following line of argument, where we stipulate that (1) involves a bound use.[47]

1. Every person from the class of '84 will get something tasty at the party
2. I am a person from the class of '84
3. So I will get something tasty at the party

Consider a relativist eavesdropper who is not from the class of '84 and who does not find the thing that speaker will get at the party tasty. Suppose further that such a relativist is operating with an autocentric point of evaluation. (1) involves a bound use and, given non-relativity, will be true for the relativist so long as every person at the party gets something that is tasty by his or her own standards. Let us assume a proliferation of standards on behalf of the relativist and assume that (1) is true on the bound reading. Let us assume further that the speaker in fact does belong to the class of '84 and hence that the second premiss is true. Now what bears emphasis is that, while the premisses will be true for the relativist eavesdropper, the conclusion will not be. So, assuming the relativist guidelines set out above, the eavesdropper in question will judge the argument invalid. But the argument is intuitively valid: hence it is a cost of the relativist approach that it delivers a verdict of invalidity.[48]

Now, of course, there are settings in which we can hear arguments of the superficial form 'Every G will get an F. I am a G. Therefore, I will get an F' as invalid. Just as the inference from 'Every mayor knows he is going to a local bar' and 'I am a mayor' to 'I am going to a local bar' is invalid if the conclusion introduces an exocentric point of

[47] It would be absurd to claim that whether a use of a sentence is bound or not is itself relative. That is like saying that the question whether 'him' is bound or deictic in 'Everyone wants someone to marry him' is relative to an onlooker.

[48] Let us put the point within the terminology of Stephenson's system. As she sets things up, there is a natural bound use of (1) where the relativistic PRO_J is absent, and also an eminently natural use of the conclusion according to which it has the underlying form 'I will get something tasty PRO_J at the party'. This predicts that an eavesdropper who does not regard the food that the speaker will get as tasty will find it natural to think that the argument is invalid, since, on the readings just adverted to, the premisses will be true for that eavesdropper and yet the conclusion false. But it is in fact not natural at all for such an eavesdropper to hear the argument as invalid.

reference out of the blue,[49] so the inference from 'Every mayor will do something fun' and 'I am a mayor' to 'I will do something fun' is invalid if the conclusion is, out of the blue, exocentrically tied to someone who hates all the activities that mayors enjoy. But what is strange is that the relativist who handles bound uses along the lines suggested will predict that the most natural and standard underlying form for the inference under consideration is one such that it ought to be reckoned invalid by many eavesdroppers. This is not a palatable result.[50]

Truth and Truth *Simpliciter*

We turn to a final cluster of themes that turn on the relativist's bifurcation of disquotational truth and truth *simpliciter*. By taking the disquotation step the relativist avails himself of 'true' and 'false' predicates that behave disquotationally. Using those predicates, he will say that the content of 'Superbowl XI was fun' is either true or false. But the relativist also wishes to insist that it makes no sense to ask of a given possible world whether the proposition *that superbowl XI was fun* is true *simpliciter* at a world or false *simpliciter* at that world; it is only true relative to this or that standard. What this means, obviously, is that the concepts of truth and falsity *simpliciter* are not those expressed by the ordinary English truth and falsity predicates. When Vinnie says 'Trifle is disgusting', we are invited to judge that the claim is false but not false *simpliciter*. But this detachment of truth *simpliciter* and falsity *simpliciter* from our ordinary concepts of truth and falsity should not be taken lightly.

Let us focus on our ordinary concepts of truth and falsity for a while. Suppose that the semantic value of 'Trifle is disgusting' is open-sentence-like and that it is true or false only relative to an assignment to some slot or covert variable, where the assignment supplies a standard. Then we will not, it seems, predicate ordinary truth and falsity of that content at all. After all, our ordinary notions of truth and falsity do not apply to open sentences: open sentences that are true or false relative to this or that assignment cannot be inserted into the Tarskian schema to deliver

[49] Suppose, for example, I say 'Everyone knows that they are going to stay in a local hotel' meaning everyone in the relevant domain is going stay in a hotel local to where they are. Suppose that a person who lives far away asks 'Aren't you going to be in the neighbourhood?' and I lie, saying 'Yes. Don't worry, I am going to stay in a local hotel.'

[50] Thanks to Sarah Moss for discussion of the issues in this section.

a true instance.[51] In so far as we are in this frame of mind, then, it looks as if we should say that the semantic value of 'Trifle is disgusting' is, in the ordinary sense of 'true' and 'false', neither true nor false—no more than an ordinary open sentence is true or false. The strategy of applying truth and falsity in the ordinary sense to the semantic value of 'Trifle is disgusting' but holding back on a further pair of fundamental truth and falsity—truth *simpliciter* and falsity *simpliciter*—does not naturally suggest itself.

These remarks about truth and falsity are not offered as absolutely conclusive. Yet it is certainly arguable that the ordinary concepts of truth and falsity run conceptually deep and that it is those concepts that lie behind our intuitions about mistakes, facts of the matter, and so on. The relativist's suggestion that these concepts run shallow and that it is some alternative set of concepts that drive many of our intuitions about mistakes, a lack of a fact of the matter, and so on, does not, on the face of it, seem very plausible. It is an advantage of the contextualist approach that it need not proliferate axes of evaluation in that way.

To underscore these points let us return to a passage, quoted earlier, where John MacFarlane (2007*b*: 242) criticizes Cappelen and Lepore's view that the sentence 'Nicola is really smart' always expresses the same proposition, one that is moreover either true or false.

> I believe that most philosophers' worries about minimal propositions are rooted in puzzlement over the question this claim naturally provokes: At which circumstances of evaluation is the proposition that [Nicola is really smart] true? Here I'm using the technical term 'circumstance of evaluation' the way David Kaplan taught us to use it in 'Demonstratives' (1989). A circumstance of evaluation includes all the parameters to which propositional truth must be relativized for semantic purposes. Though Kaplan himself included times in his circumstances of evaluation (and contemplated other parameters as well), the current orthodoxy is that circumstances of evaluation are just possible worlds. In this setting, our question becomes: At which possible worlds is the minimal proposition true? I'll call this the intension problem for minimal propositions (using the term 'intension' for a function from possible

[51] Some Tarski-influenced readers will insist that, if the open sentence is true relative to all assignments then in the ordinary sense it is true. We are dubious about the insistence; we suspect that this idea requires an extension of the ordinary conception of truth. But in any case, in the case at hand, the relevant open sentence is not one that is true relative to all assignments nor false relative to all assignments, and so will come out as neither true nor false even on a Tarksian perspective.

worlds to truth values for propositions, or to extensions for properties and relations).[52]

What Cappelen and Lepore say is that 'Nicola is really smart' always expresses the proposition *that Nicola is really smart* and that this proposition is true iff Nicola is really smart. Now if 'true' and 'false' are the ordinary disquotational notions of truth and falsity, then, *by MacFarlane's lights*, no deep puzzle is raised by the question 'Under which circumstances of evaluation is the proposition *that Nicola is really smart* true?' After all, Cappelen and Lepore have an answer: if things were such that Nicola was really smart, then the proposition *that Nicola is really smart* would be true, and, if things were such that it was not the case that Nicola was really smart, then the proposition *that Nicola is really smart* would not be true. By MacFarlane's own lights, such an assertion is perfectly in order so long as the ordinary concepts of truth and falsity are in play. After all, a consequence of his own view is that a Cappelen-and-Lepore-style theory is perfectly acceptable for the proposition *that Nicola is really smart*: it is just that more can be said. That this is not what MacFarlane actually says is quite telling. As the above quotation would indicate, he finds it eminently natural to think that, in so far as there is a single semantic value to all uses of 'Nicola is really smart', it is a semantic value that is not true or false. This is, in effect, to abandon the disquotation step for that kind of semantic value. In sum, a bifurcation of the concepts of truth and truth *simpliciter* is strained and unnatural. Indeed, it is so strained and unnatural that those who bifurcate in this way typically have a hard time keeping track of the distinction that they have tried to institute.[53]

[52] Note that we have not undertaken in this monograph to defend a minimalism of this sort. Our interest in this context is to question whether MacFarlane has a right to the criticisms that he raises.

[53] Suppose it were conceded that the semantics of human natural languages is non-relativist and that the objects of human thought are Simplicity-friendly. What then should we say about the suggestion that languages with relativist-friendly semantics are at least perfectly possible? Even here we recommend caution. For one thing, given the contours of our own language, it is arguable that 'belief' picks out a relation that can hold only between subjects and Simplicity-friendly propositions. In that case, one should baulk at the suggestions that relativist-friendly objects of thought are even possible. Secondly, it is arguable that any possible beings who use a disquotational truth predicate will use a predicate that is 'magnetized' to fundamental truth. In that case, in so far as we presume the possible beings to have a disquotational truth predicate, it may turn out to be deeply uncharitable to construe them as incorrectly predicating truth of relativist-friendly contents. In sum, we think that the jury is very much out concerning whether communities with relativist-friendly languages are even possible.

A corollary of these points is that it will typically be somewhat tricky for the relativist to distinguish herself from the trenchant realist who eschews a contextualist semantics. Suppose we are simple-minded realists about predicates of personal taste and are presented with a supposed card-carrying relativist who combines the ideology of relative and disquotational truth. There is a quite natural translation algorithm available to us. After all, such a realist can perfectly make room for a family of properties expressed by constructions of the form 'true by so-and-so's standards', properties that are distinct from those of truth and falsity.[54] Adopting now the perspective of such a realist, it will be natural to interpret the relativist's talk of some proposition being true at a standard of taste index as expressing the claim that the proposition is true by such and such standards, a perfectly legitimate claim even by the realist's lights. Meanwhile, it will be very natural to interpret the relativist's disquotational truth predicates as expressing the very properties that the realist expresses by 'true' and 'false'. According to this proposed translation manual, the so-called relativist and the realist do not differ at all![55,56]

[54] P will be true by so-and-so's standards iff the condition 'if S then P' is true, where 'S' articulates so-and-so's standards.

[55] Obviously, the concerns just voiced generalize beyond the topic of personal taste. By way of illustration, let us briefly turn to a style of relativism that we have not focused on in this monograph but that has been advocated by MacFarlane. We have in mind a relativist approach to the interaction of tensed statements with the passage of time. MacFarlane advocates a view according to which 'There will be a sea battle tomorrow' is true or false relative to a time when the sea battle has happened but neither true nor false relative to times earlier than the sea battle (MacFarlane forthcoming *c*). As he notices, this can be combined with the thesis that instances of excluded middle are true relative to times before the sea battle (as well as after). And in so far as one accepts disquotational truth predicates, one takes the relevant theses of (disquotational) bivalence as being true both before and after. But, with all this in place, it becomes hard for the realist to recognize a substantial dispute. After all, the realist can recognize the relation of 'being settled at' that holds between a proposition and a time, where a proposition is settled at a time iff the intrinsic history up to and including that time necessitates it or its negation. The realist can naturally interpret the so-called relativist's 'true at' as 'settled at', and then interpret the disquotational predicates as expressing monadic truth or falsity. Once this translation manual is accepted, full reconciliation is possible between the two views. But it is hard to see what makes such a manual inappropriate. (We are grateful to Crispin Wright for helpful discussion here.)

[56] Certainly, there are philosophical self-descriptions that may point to a difference between the relativist and the realist. In so far as the relativist wishes to lean on the notion of explanatoriness, he can still urge: 'Granted, the translation scheme is natural. But the question remains whether ordinary truth or truth relative to a standard is explanatorily fundamental.' Moreover, in so far as the relativist has available a metalanguage that takes structured propositions seriously, he can urge: 'The translation manual leaves

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The tenor of this chapter has been strongly pro-contextualist and anti-relativist. Relativists have exaggerated the extent to which there are data to trouble the contextualist and have underestimated the resources available to him. Meanwhile, as we hope to have shown, it is rather easy to put pressure on the relativist position from a variety of directions. And if there is little going for relativism in the case of predicates of personal taste, it is very hard to imagine that it will fare much better elsewhere. This, together with the preceding chapters, suggests an overall verdict: on the one hand, the case against Simplicity is surprisingly weak; on the other, the case for a relativist package—its most radical adversary—is particularly dismal.

We do not anticipate that these reflections will convert the more entrenched relativists. (At best these reflections will alter the path they steer through the relativist underworld.) Such is the nature of philosophy—if one is resourceful enough one can find ways of keeping a misguided picture going, finding new ways to keep the audience's eye off the ball. Even though some are doomed to be trapped by a relativist picture, there are fence-sitters and swing voters whom one can hope to prevent from becoming ensnared by it. The extended defence of Simplicity that we have undertaken is most of all designed for them.

open whether the syntactically monadic "true" expresses a genuinely monadic property.' We leave it as an open question whether the ideology of explanation or structured propositions can bear the burden that would thereby be placed upon it. Moreover, this way of proceeding risks conceding that there is nothing in pre-reflective ways of talking that points towards relativism rather than realism.

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