A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF DE SE BELIEF ASCRITIONS

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Abstract

I show how a de se belief ascription such as "Privatus believes that he himself is rich" may be dealt with by means of a scope distinction over and above that one separating de dicto and de re ascriptions. The idea is, roughly, that 'Privatus...himself' forms in this statement a unity, a single "spread" sign that is at the same time in a de re and de dicto position. If so, H.-N. Castañeda's contention that the "quasi-indicator" 'he himself' (she herself, it itself) belongs to a "unique, irreducible logical category" of singular terms is, at best, misleading. Further, my account is superior to the well-known theories of R. Chisholm and D. Lewis, according to which de se ascriptions state that the believer "directly attributes properties to himself or herself".

1. Introduction

H.-N. Castañeda made famous de se belief ascriptions, expressed with the aid of what Castañeda calls quasi-indicators. Since a de dicto ascription,

(DD) Privatus believes that Privatus is rich,

de re ascription,

(DR) Privatus believes of Privatus that he is rich,

and de se ascription,

(DS) Privatus believes that he himself is rich,
are not equivalent with each other.\textsuperscript{2} Castañeda thought that the quasi-indicator 'he himself' in the \textit{de se} ascription DS belongs to a "unique logical category [of singular terms], irreducible to other referring mechanisms".\textsuperscript{3}

Here, DD and DR exemplify the notorious distinction between \textit{de dicto} and \textit{de re}. I see this basically as a scope distinction that may be characterized roughly by saying that in DD, but not in DR, the latter 'Privatus' occurs within the scope of 'believes', which creates an \textit{opaque context}. In this respect,

\begin{equation}
(\text{DR2}) \quad \text{Privatus is believed by Privatus to be } \text{is rich}
\end{equation}

might be taken as a more graphic formulation of DR. Alternatively, we may say, following Quine, that a position is transparent (or \textit{de re}) if it allows substitutions of co-referring terms \textit{salva veritate}, and opaque (\textit{de dicto}) otherwise. The latter 'Privatus' is in DD in an opaque position, and thus the substitution of it with a coreferring term is not in general truth-preserving, while in DR it is in a transparent position, thus allowing substitution \textit{salva veritate}.

DS, which is an example of \textit{de se} belief ascriptions, appears to introduce a further complication, because it is not equivalent with either DD or DR: According to what I think is the standard view, DD and DS are logically independent (i.e. neither entails the other), and while DS entails DR, DR does not entail DS.\textsuperscript{4} These can be shown by the familiar stories (i) and (ii):\textsuperscript{5} (i), Privatus learns pretty much about somebody called 'Privatus' — e.g. that he is rich — without realising that he is himself that person, and without any inclination to assert, "I am rich" — this shows that DS does not follow from DD or from DR. (ii), Privatus asserts, "I am rich", but, due to a loss of memory or something, dissents from "Privatus is rich" — this shows (allegedly) that DS does not entail DD. Further, if DS is true, Privatus has of himself, i.e. of Privatus, the belief that he is rich, which means that DR is true (that is, DS entails DR).

The curiosity of DS has been a subject of much philosophising. It is of course a positive thing that problem cases in this way induce discussion and debate. Still, one should not be too impressed by the problems like the one that is said to inhere in DS. Those who get too excited over DS tend to make too much out of it by letting it to dictate their general account of belief ascriptions, or by claiming, on DS alone, that there is a special kind of belief, belief \textit{de se}, to be separated from the normal kind of belief,\textsuperscript{6} or by making some
epistemological, "mind-philosophical" or even metaphysical avowals, e.g. about self-awareness, or about "first-person propositions", solely on the basis of DS.

I think this shows very questionable methodology. Perhaps this "problem of beliefs about oneself" is only due to an unusual semantic feature of the reflexive pronoun 'himself' / 'herself' / 'itself', and has in itself nothing to do with the theory of belief ascriptions in general, or with epistemology or the philosophy of mind or metaphysics, or with the question, whether there are different kinds of beliefs. This is exactly what I attempt to show below: That de se ascriptions can be accounted for by studying the reflexive pronoun, and by then noticing a surprising possibility of a further scope distinction, over and above the one separating DD and DR.

2. Chisholm and Lewis on de se belief ascriptions

De se ascriptions are usually regarded as being more closely connected with de re ascriptions than with de dicto ascriptions. It is sometimes held that DS is but a special case of DR. R. Chisholm (esp. 1981) and D. Lewis (1979), on the other hand, see DR as a special case of DS, propounding theories — very similar to each other — on which believing "is a matter of attributing properties to oneself" and "not a matter of accepting propositions" (Chisholm 1981, 1). In Chisholm's terms, the difference between DR and DS is, roughly, that in DS Privatus directly attributes richness to himself, while in DR the attribution of richness is direct or indirect (mediated by an attribution of some other properties to oneself). What happens in the situation where DR is true but DS false is that Privatus indirectly attributes richness to some person, which happens to be, unbeknownst to him, he himself (which validates DR), but do not directly attribute richness to himself (which means that DS is false).

It seems that both Chisholm and Lewis have been inspired by DS, or in any case they appear to regard ascriptions of "self-regarding beliefs" as an impressive support of their theories. I shall show below that the reflexive pronoun combined with 'believes' produces a transformation in the belief-predicate, which accounts for de se ascriptions. This has in itself nothing to do with direct or indirect attributions of something to oneself (as Chisholm would like to have it). This removes an important motivation of Chisholm's theory, as well as that of Lewis', and thus weakens them to some extent. In short, the phenomenon under discussion is purely a semantic characteristic of the
reflexive pronoun, and has no such importance as attached to it by Castañeda, Chisholm, Lewis and others.

Both the contention that DR is a special case of DS, and its reverse, seem mistaken to me. We also have what might be called a de re de se ascription, e.g.,

\[(DSR) \quad \text{Privatus believes of himself that he is rich}\]

(which is equivalent with DR). This gives some initial plausibility to the idea that DS is a form of DD, pace Chisholm, Lewis, and others. If this idea proves to be the correct one, we see that Chisholm's (and Lewis') account of DS is erroneous from the very beginning: For Chisholm's account of DD ascriptions (see Chisholm 1981, 38-9) cannot explain DS reports, not at least without resorting to "first-person propositions", and Chisholm (idem, 15-7, 21-2) clearly disavows such propositions.

3. Fregean and Sellarsian theories of belief ascriptions

In studying the connections between DD, DR and DS ascriptions below, I shall utilize more standard propositional theories of belief ascriptions — those in which believing is a matter of "accepting propositions" — even though such theories are (allegedly) unable to deal with DS. Specifically, I shall employ a (roughly) Sellarsian nominalistic "expression-based" account and a Fregean "platonistic" "sense-based" account (thus, in calling these both "propositional" theories, I understand 'proposition' broadly, as covering both sentences and (Fregean) thoughts).

A quick reminder of Sellars' views of quotation may be in order. Sellars holds that there are two notions of quotation, based on how expressions quoted are to be classified. Sellars separates the shape-based classification of expressions (indicated by asterisk quotes) from the classification based on linguistic roles (dot-quotes). \(*e*\) and \(\cdot e\cdot\) are for Sellars sortal predicates over expression tokens (or inscriptions), and those tokens that are by their shape similar enough to \('e'\) fall under \(*e*\), while those tokens that share the linguistic role with \('e'\) fall under \(\cdot e\cdot\). Thus, for example, many (but not all) \(*\text{Socrates}*\)s as well as \(*\text{Sokrates}*\)s (of e.g. German) are \(\cdot \text{Socrates}\cdot\)s, and \(\cdot \text{red}\cdot\)s and (German) \(*\text{rot}*\)s are (typically) \(\cdot \text{red}\cdot\)s, for they have the same linguistic roles (in English and German, respectively).
In presenting theories of belief ascriptions, I shall use the *de dicto* report,

\[(1D)\] Decius believes that Caesar's (only) sidekick is loyal,

as an example. A Sellarsian analysis of this is, roughly,

\[(1Ds)\] Decius assents to some •Caesar's sidekick is loyal•.

That is, under this analysis (1D) means that Decius assents to some sentence token that has (in Decius' language) the same (or similar enough) linguistic role as have our tokens that are *Caesar's sidekick is loyal*.\(^\text{12}\) This may be formalized as,

\[(1Ds*)\] \(\exists x(\cdot Lc\cdot x \& A_d x)\),\(^\text{13}\)

where the quantification is over expression tokens, 'L' stands for the loyalty-predicate, 'c' shortens 'Caesar's sidekick', and 'A_d' is to be read, "Decius assents to". That *Brutus*es are not •Caesar's sidekick•s (although Brutus = Caesar's sidekick) blocks the substitution of 'Caesar's sidekick' with 'Brutus' in (1D).\(^\text{14}\)

Sellars' theory of *de dicto* ascriptions serves directly as a basis of his account of *de re* ascriptions. According to the latter, e.g. the *de re* ascription,

\[(2R)\] Brutus is believed by Decius to be loyal

is to be analysed as,

\[(2Rs)\] There is a sign token x referring to Brutus such that Decius assents to some sentence token which has the same linguistic role as the sentence token formed by concatenating an •is loyal• to x,

which may be rendered formally as,

\[(2Rs*)\] \(\exists x y (b=r_x \& \cdot L\cdot y \& A_d (y_x))\),

where the quantifications are again over tokens of expressions, 'r_x' denotes the referent of the sign token x, and 'y_x' names the expression token formed by concatenating the tokens x and y. The motivation of this formulation is that (2R) is true whenever Decius has some means or other to denote Brutus (e.g. by a
*Caesar's sidekick*), and he attributes loyalty to whoever person this denotation happens to pick out.\(^{15}\)

Let us then turn to a Fregean account of belief ascriptions. On such an account, (1D) says,

\[(1Df) \text{ Decius takes as true (i.e. believes) the thought that Caesar's sidekick is loyal,} \]

or formally,

\[(1Df^*) \text{ } \mathcal{B}_d \mathcal{L}^{\text{s}c}, \]

where 'B\(_d\)' is read, "Decius believes that", and 'L\(^{\text{s}c}\)' denotes the thought that Caesar's sidekick is loyal. That the sense of 'Brutus' is distinct from that of 'Caesar's sidekick' (although Brutus = Caesar's sidekick) blocks the substitution of 'Caesar's sidekick' with 'Brutus' in (1D).

Frege did not consider de re belief ascriptions separately. The following is a simplified version of M. Dummett's reconstruction for a Fregean DR.\(^{16}\) On this reconstruction, (2R) comes out as

\[(2Rf^*) \exists x (b=d_x \& \mathcal{B}_d (L^{s}c_x)), \]

where the quantification is over Fregean senses, 'd\(_x\)' denotes the object the sense \(x\) "determines", and 'x y' indicates that the senses \(x\) and \(y\) are "united" (in an appropriate manner).\(^{17}\) The motivation of this formulation is that (2R) is true whenever Decius grasps some sense that determines Brutus (e.g. the sense of 'Caesar's sidekick'), and believes (i.e. takes-as-true) the thought formed from that sense and the sense of 'is loyal'.

In passing, I wish to note that the formulations (2Rs\(^*\)) and (2Rf\(^*\)) are actually very near to each other. In fact, the Sellarsian (2Rs\(^*\)) may be Freged straightforwardly to yield:

\[(2Rs_f^*) \exists x y (b=r_x \& L^{s}y \& A_d (y_x)), \]

where the quantifications are over signs (but not necessarily over sign tokens). Similarly, (2Rf\(^*\)) may easily be Sellarsed:
(2Rfs*) \[ \exists x (b = d \_x \land B_d(\_L \_x)) \],

where the quantification is over dot-predicates. (Indeed, Sellars implies, e.g. in Sellars 1969, 1973, that his "linguistic roles" correspond to Frege's "senses").

The formulations (2Rs*) and (2Rf*) are directly based on the corresponding DD ascriptions. This means that if Brutus exists, (2Rs*) and (2Rf*) follow from the respective DD ascription (i.e. from "Decius believes that Brutus is loyal"). This is against the standard conception of _de re_, according to which a _de re_ ascription (like (2R)) is not true unless the believer (Decius) "has in mind", in some sense, the appropriate objects (Brutus), or unless he knows (or believes) _what_ or _who_ those objects are, or unless he is "acquainted" enough with those objects, or unless those objects are "in his ken", or unless there is some sort of "epistemic intimacy" between him and those objects, etc. However, I think, as do e.g. Chisholm (1981, 106-15) and Boer & Lycan (1986, 125-6), that there is a very thin conception of _de re_ ascriptions (along with fatter ones) according to which one need not be in any substantial manner epistemically close to the objects the belief is about; in fact, the mere ability to refer to such objects (e.g. by a definite description) is enough. And since these requirements of epistemic intimacy are not particularly relevant to my discussion, I refrain from considering and formulating these requirements, and stick to the thin conception.

It is commonly held that classic theories à la Sellars and Frege, as formulated exemplarily in (1Ds*)&(2Rs*) and (1Df*)&(2Rf*) above, cannot cope with _de se_ ascriptions. But in fairness to Frege, we must admit that Frege never presented anything like (1Df*) or (2Rf*); he only said that a belief ascription states that a believer and a thought stand in the relation of believing.\(^{18}\) Also, he did not consider the distinction between _de dicto_ and _de re_. The following report, which cannot be captured by anything like (1Df*), is perfectly OK for Frege:

(3) Decius believes what Brutus thought at \(t\).\(^{19}\)

Further, Frege could allow the presentation of (1D) in the following manner:

(1Df2) Decius believes what he could grasp and express by "Caesar's sidekick is loyal".\(^{20}\)
Thus, Frege could have analysed DS simply as:

\[(DSf)\] Privatus believes what he could grasp [and express? — cf. below] by "I am rich",

which clearly makes DS distinct from DD and DR: Privatus may not realise that what he grasps by means of "Privatus is rich" and "I am rich" have the same truth-value (since he may assent to "I am not Privatus").

Two remarks are in order here. First, \((1Df2)\) and \((DSf)\) may be challenged by claiming that they are vulnerable to the famous Langford-Church translation argument in that e.g. a correct translation of \((1D)\) into some other language is something totally different from the translation of \((1Df2)\): the latter contains the English sentence "Caesar's sidekick is loyal". But this can be replied easily: Let us just construe the quotation in \((1Df2)\), as well as that in \((DSf)\), as translatable. In fact, I find it very curious that philosophers usually treat quotation primarily, or even exclusively, after the model "'Cicero' contains six letters"; that is, what is inside the quotes is treated only as a shape, or as a string of letters. I think this is only secondary, and rather insignificant, usage of quotes. When we quote words, as we primarily do, and not only strings, translation of what is inside the quotes is normally perfectly legitimate.

Secondly, \((DSf)\) is complicated by Frege's two-fold view of 'I', apparent in his paper "Der Gedanke" (1918), according to which there are "private Ts" and "communicable 'I's". It may be objected that the Fregean \((DSf)\) presupposes private inexpressible (but graspable) I-thoughts, the existence of which is rather doubtful. However, I do not know any argument against the following suggestion: Let us just dump such I-thoughts and say that \((DSf)\) is true whenever Privatus believes what he could grasp and express by "I am rich". This would mean that the communicable 'I' is in question, and we would avoid the objectionable private I-thoughts altogether.

However, the following, most interesting case is still troublesome for Fregean and Sellarsian theories, and, I conjecture, for many other kinds of theories as well. Assume that exactly one man is watching Privatus, and this man thinks, on clearly seeing Privatus, that he is bald — he may (sincerely and reflectively) assent to e.g., "That man is bald". Thus,

\[(4)\] The only man watching me believes that I am bald.
is true when Privatus utters it (and Privatus may also assent to this). As it happens, Privatus is himself the only man watching Privatus, which means that

(5) I am the only man watching me

is also true, if Privatus utters it. Then, (4)&(5) yields, by a substitution outside the scope of 'believes', that

(6) I believe that I am bald

is true, if Privatus utters it. It follows from this that somebody else may truly utter the de se ascription "Privatus believes that he himself is bald".

Now, it is perfectly consistent with this story that Privatus assents to, "I am not bald": He is actually watching himself via a mirror without realising this, i.e. he does not know (nor believe) that he is himself the only man watching him. Then, we face the problem that DS, which appears to be true on (6), is precisely what is not true. In fact, Privatus could have originally assented, instead of assenting to (4), to

(7) The only man watching me believes that I am bald, but he is mistaken: I am not bald.

From this and the principle that assent entails belief it follows that Privatus' utterance,

(8) I believe that I am bald and I believe that I am not bald,

is also true, and so is, consequently, somebody else's utterance,

(9) Privatus believes that he himself is bald and Privatus believes that he himself is not bald.

Further, if the step from dissent to nonbelief is valid, even Privatus' utterance

(10) I believe that I am bald and I do not believe that I am bald

would be true. Finally, assuming that (7) is true (so that Privatus erred when he thought that the man he was watching was bald), we have, on (5), that
(11) I believe that I am bald, but I am mistaken: I am not bald, is also true. Needless to say, (8)-(11) seem very problematic. The special difficulty in (4)-(6) is that one should give a principled reason for the failure of substitutivity outside 'believes'. Below, I shall give an explanation for this, i.e. for the fact that (4)&(5)&~(6) may be true, even though (6) seems to follow from (4)&(5) by a normal, transparent substitution.

4. Geach on the reflexive pronoun

Let us proceed towards the promised account of de se ascriptions. P. Geach studies in his 1962 book Reference and Generality (esp. 132-43) the third-person reflexive pronouns 'himself', 'herself', 'itself' as they occur in e.g. 'Ann sees herself' or in "Cicero shaves himself". He holds that "it is wrong to regard 'himself' as turning a two-place [predicable] into a one-place predicable by filling up one place; rather, a reflexive pronoun fills up both places of the two-place predicable into which it is inserted" (136); and that we fill up "the two places of a predicable with 'himself' so as to get a one place predicable" (139). Geach offers a general argument for the claim that we should make a distinction between "a Fs a" and "a Fs himself", which I think can be summarised as follows: From any binary predicate (say, "_shaves ...") we may form two unary predicates ("a shaves ...", "_shaves b"), but for the respective predicate with a reflexive pronoun ("_shaves himself") this is not possible: "thus a reflexive pronoun does not fill one blank of a two- or many-place predicable in the way that a referring expression does" (135). Geach (132, 138) also points out that even in some strictly extensional sentences of English, the replacement of "a Fs a" by a logically equivalent expression "a Fs himself" (or vice versa) is not truth-preserving: E.g. "Only Brutus shaved Brutus" neither entails, nor is entailed by, "Only Brutus shaved himself".

On Geach's view, then, there is a structural difference between e.g.

(12) Brutus shaves Brutus

and

(12h) Brutus shaves himself
— in (12) we have a two-place relation of *shaving*, but in (12h) a one-place relation (i.e. property) of *self-shaving* or *being a self-shaver*. I think Geach's contention can to some extent be supported by noticing that there are plenty of 'self-' (or 'auto-') prefixed predicate expressions in colloquial English, which indeed seem to turn a two-placed predicate one-placed; "This plant self-pollinates" is a good example.31

I would like to introduce a notion of, and a notation for, *constant abstraction*, reminiscent to \( \lambda \)-abstraction32, for displaying the distinction of arity between (12) and (12h). Rendered by means of constant abstraction the two-placed (12) becomes

\[
(12^*) \quad bxby(xyS)
\]

(where 'b' shortens 'Brutus' and 'S' 'shaves'), and the one-placed (12h),

\[
(12h^*) \quad bx(xxS),
\]

which indicate the difference in the arity perspicuously. It may be in order to explain these renderings. What we have in (12*) is only a notational variant of what is expressed in the ordinary predicate logic by 'Sbb' and by means of \( \lambda \)-abstraction by \( \lambda xy(Sxy)bb \). (12h*) in turn is the same as \( \lambda x(Sxx)b' \) — and there is no alternative in the language of predicate logic to the presentation of this as 'Sbb' as well. The reason for writing the matrices of (12*) and (12h*) non-standardly as 'xyS' and 'xxS' is that we are here dealing with a thoroughly transparent predicate 'shaves' (cf. below).

Now, what is the point of this whole business of making a notational distinction between (12) and (12h), as (12*) and (12h*)? Surely, it is pointed out, from the normal model-theoretic point of view, or, in terms of Carnapian intensions, there is no distinction to be drawn between (12) and (12h) — they are true exactly in the same possible worlds, i.e. their truth-conditions coincide, i.e. they express the same proposition (as 'proposition' is most commonly understood); in short, they are logically equivalent. Further, in Fregean terms the same thought is expressed in (12) and (12h).33 I admit that these contentions are true. Nevertheless, it may be too hasty to draw the conclusion that there cannot then be *any* semantically significant distinction between sentences like (12) and (12h); indeed, it is conceivable, perhaps even plausible, that this sort of distinction does matter in contexts that notoriously do not respect logical equvalency, i.e. in intensional contexts like those created by 'believes'. There
simply should not be any *prima facie* reason for this distinction *not* having a significant difference in such contexts. In fact, by applying Geach's account presented above to belief ascriptions, I shall attempt show in the next sections that this difference in the form, in the structure, *does* matter in belief ascriptions: It separates DS from DD and DR.\textsuperscript{34}

5. Admiring and self-admiring

My account for the ascriptions of "self-regarding beliefs", like DS, will be based on the contention that it *is* significant whether we take the belief predicate as one-placed or as two-placed. It will be instructive to analyse first a clear direct object intensional predicate, like 'admires'. Let us thus consider:

\begin{align*}
\text{(AD)} & \quad \text{Caesar's sidekick admires Caesar's sidekick,} \\
\text{(AS)} & \quad \text{Caesar's sidekick admires himself,} \\
\text{(AR)} & \quad \text{Caesar's sidekick is admired by Caesar's sidekick,} \\
\text{(ASR)} & \quad \text{Himself is admired by Caesar's sidekick.}
\end{align*}

With respect to opacity, these are analogous to DD, DS, DR and DSR, respectively, or so AD-ASR can be interpreted. (ASR is of course ungrammatical, but its purported meaning should be clear: cf. DSR.) Then, construing 'admires' ('\(A\)') initially as a two-placed predicate, I propose to formalize AD-ASR as follows:

\begin{align*}
\text{(AD*)} & \quad \text{cxcy(xAy)} \\
\text{(or equivalently, 'cAc'),} \\
\text{(AS*)} & \quad \text{cx(xAx),} \\
\text{(AR*)} & \quad \text{cxcy(xyA)} \\
\text{(or equivalently, 'ccA'),} \\
\text{(ASR*)} & \quad \text{cx(xxA)}
\end{align*}
(or equivalently, 'ccA').

In AD the second 'Caesar's sidekick', unlike the first one, is in an opaque position, i.e. in a position that does not allow substitution with a coreferring term salva veritate. In formal renderings I indicate opaque positions by placing them after the predicate. Let me at this point lay down the following properties governing constant abstraction:

(i) $ax([..]S[x]) = [..]S[a]$, if, and only if, 'x' does not occur in '[''.

(ii) $ax([x]S[..]) = [a]S[..]$, if, and only if, 'x' does not occur in '[''.

(iii) $a=b \land ax([x]S[..]) \rightarrow bx([x]S[..])$.

The differences between AD, AS, AR and ASR can now be brought up as follows. AS* is not equivalent with AD* because 'x' occurs in the matrix 'xAx' of AS*, as it were, both transparently and opaque, cf. (i). (I shall return to this matter below.) Nor is AS* equivalent with AR*: AS* is "partially opaque" while AR* is thoroughly transparent (cf. (ii)). Further, since AD entails AR, we can see why AS entails AR: the latter 'x' in AS* can be "made transparent" truth-preservingly. Finally, AR is equivalent with ASR, since in the absence of opaqueness, "x Fs x'' is always equivalent with "x Fs himself/herself/itself".

The difference between AR and AD may be seen as a scope distinction: The second 'Caesar's sidekick', which lies outside the scope of 'admires' in AR, is within its scope in AD. Surprisingly, AS may be regarded as arising from a further scope distinction. What is surprising in this, is that it initially seems that there cannot be further distinction to be made in terms of scope: A singular term either lies within an intensional predicate, or without. But now, just as e.g. (12h), i.e. "Brutus shaves himself", is literally one-placed, with its single argument-place being occupied by both 'Brutus' and 'himself', AS is one-placed as well, and 'Caesar's sidekick - himself' is also here "spread": It occurs simultaneously within and without 'admires'. So, in terms of scope, AD is two-placed with respect to 'Caesar's sidekick', and one of these places is within, but the other without, 'admires'; DR is two-placed, with its both occurrences of 'Caesar's sidekick' outside; and DS is one-placed, with its only singular term lying both inside and outside.

I think what we have in AS may be expressed also as follows. Just as we can say, "Brutus is a self-shaver" or "This plant self-pollinates", we could
convey the content of AS by saying: "Caesar's sidekick self-admires", or more naturally, "Caesar's sidekick is a self-admirer". 'Self-shaves' is a predicate distinct from 'shaves', 'self-pollinates' distinct from 'pollinates', and 'self-admires' distinct from 'admires'. This is due to the simple fact that the arity differs: 'self-shaves', 'self-pollinates', 'self-admires' are one-placed. For 'shaves' and 'pollinates' this really does not matter, but for 'admires' it makes a crucial difference: it separates AS from AD, as we have just seen. We are entitled to expect that this holds for other intensional predicates, like 'believes', as well.

6. A solution to the problem de se belief ascriptions

Indeed, we can treat DD-DSR, i.e.,

(DD) Privatus believes that Privatus is rich,
(DS) Privatus believes that he himself is rich,
(DR) Privatus believes of Privatus that he is rich,
(DSR) Privatus believes of himself that he is rich,

exactly in the similar manner. Let \( \beta \) stand for something like believing to be rich. Then we have, for DD, DS, DR and DSR, respectively,

(DD*) \( pxpy(x\beta y) \)
(or equivalently, \( p\beta p \)),
(DS*) \( px(x\beta x) \),
(DR*) \( pxpy(xy\beta) \)
(or equivalently, \( pp\beta \)),
(DSR*) \( px(xx\beta) \)
(or equivalently, \( pp\beta \)).
These are exactly like AD*-ASR* above. And everything that was said about 'admires' above holds for 'believes' as well. DS arises from a surprising further scope-distinction; DS is one-placed, with a fused occurrence of 'Privatus-himself' "spread over both sides of 'believes'"; DS says that Privatus self-believes something, or is a self-believer of something. Admittedly, "Privatus self-believes to be rich" and "Privatus is a self-believer of richness" sound rather odd. Something like "Privatus self-assigns richness", as opposed to "Privatus assigns richness to Privatus", would be more natural formulations. So, perhaps there is a grain of truth in Chisholm's (and Lewis') account after all, for, as we recall from section 2 above, Chisholm holds that believing "is a matter of attributing properties to oneself" (and attributing means about the same as assigning, although it must be noted that Chisholm uses 'attributes' extensionally). Whether there is a grain of truth in Chisholm's account or not, that account is mistaken: First, as DD* and DS* show, DS is parallel to DD, not to DR. Secondly, believing is not a matter of attributing properties to oneself, even if "Privatus assigns richness to Privatus" and "Privatus self-assigns richness" were the most natural ways to express DD and DS; for "Privatus believes that Brutus is rich" may perfectly naturally be rendered as "Privatus assigns richness to Brutus", but there is no inclination to explain this by saying that Privatus really attributes to himself something. Thirdly, there is no more plausibility in the idea of direct vs. indirect attribution than in the idea of direct vs. indirect shaving. Fourthly, I cannot see how Chisholm could account for the admiring case along the lines he approaches 'believes', i.e., the lines of, "admiring (in general) is not a matter of ..., but a matter of ... to oneself". Fifthly, I wonder whether Chisholm is able to explain the inference failure in the case (4)-(6) above.

It should by now be apparent how my account explains this, i.e. the failure in the inference from (4)&(5) to (6), i.e. from the truth of "The only man watching me believes that I am bald" and "I am the only man watching me" to the truth of "I believe that I am bald". Since the form of (4) is "wδi", but that of (6), "ix(xδx)", the latter need not (and indeed does not) follow, on (5), i.e. on "i=w", from the former. The reason for this is that while (4) is two-placed, in (6) these argument-places are fused together, to yield a one-placed predication. In other words, it is only an illusion that the forms of (4) and (6) are alike, and this explains why this example does not violate the principle that substitution in a transparent position is truth-preserving: While (4) is of the form "w believes that I am bald", (6) is, surprisingly, not at all of this form, but rather of the form "ix(x believes that x is bald)". 'I' just is not merely in a transparent position in (6). I have not encountered in the literature any theory of belief ascriptions that can
give a principled account for this failure of substitution in what is apparently a transparent position.

Admittedly, we can infer something from (4)&(5), namely, the two-placed (13) \( \text{i} \delta \text{i} \).

This is the same as "ixiy(\(x\delta y\))" but differs from (6), i.e. from "ix(\(x\delta x\))". I do not know how to express (13) in the vernacular, or indeed what should it be taken to mean. To say that (13) may also be conveyed by means of (6), i.e. "I believe that I am bald", is to introduce an ambiguity to this latter sentence. Under this secondary meaning of (6), it could be uttered truly without a realisation that one is oneself bald, and it would not entail the truth of "Privatus believes that he himself is bald". Consider also a variation of (4)-(6) in which "The only man watching me likes me" and "I am the only man watching me" are true. If we say that these entail the truth of "I like me" ("iLi"), we are separating this latter from "I like myself" ("ix(xLx)")..

In the beginning of this paper I referred to Castañeda's "irreducibility thesis", according to which in sentences like DS 'he himself' / 'she herself', which Castañeda denotes by 'he*', belongs to a "unique logical category" of singular terms — a category the members of which cannot be analysed by means of "normal" singular terms. If the present account is correct this thesis is seen to be totally misguided. There are no such singular terms like 'he*', for in the correct analysis of DS, presented above, 'he himself' has no independent status at all; it may be said that it is dispensed with altogether. 40

It may be felt that I have not yet explained properly why DS is not equivalent with DD; or why we cannot get from DS* (or, "px(\(x\beta x\))") to DD* (or, "p\(\beta p\)"), or vice versa, i.e. why we have in (i) above the proviso "if, and only if, 'x' does not occur in '[..]'". We can perhaps shed some light on this by considering again the Fregean theory of belief ascriptions. It may appear that we can on the present analysis easily give a Fregean account for DS: Since DS is completely parallel with DD (just as DSR is parallel with DR), and we have a Fregean account for DD along the lines of (1Df*) above, let us just apply this to DS. However, we cannot do this (or at least I cannot see how we could). In blunt terms, the problem for Frege is that the "fused position" in statements like DS should be filled with something that simultaneously refers to two kinds of objects, viz. to senses and to "normal" objects (like Privatus). According to Frege, the first 'Privatus' in DD refers to Privatus while the second 'Privatus'
refers to the sense of 'Privatus'. In view of AS and DS, one begins to wonder whether this Fregean theory is a viable way to approach the issue of opacity. Elaborating, it appears as a mistake to treat opacity as a property of expressions, i.e. to account for e.g. DD by saying that due to opacity the second 'Privatus' refers to something else than the first one. It is simply against the common sense to posit an ambiguity in this way. I think we should not regard opacity as a property of signs, but rather say that a position in which a sign occurs may be either transparent or opaque (or both!). We have in DD two occurrences of the same old 'Privatus' (same also with respect to reference), but these occurrences are in positions that have crucially distinct properties: One allows substitutions truth-preservingly, the other does not. We then have also examples like DS in which there is a position that is both transparent and opaque. This seems extremely odd, but this oddity has no consequences with regard to the properties of expressions.

7. Belief de se

I have said that DS is to be accounted for by means of 'self-believes', or by means of arity. However, many writers hold that DS is an indication of a non-standard notion of belief, namely, de se belief. A short answer to them is that there is no more separate de se believing than there is separate de se shaving. A longer answer is as follows. Certainly, 'self-believes' is a predicate distinct from 'believes': the arity differs. However, 'believes' is strictly "behind" 'self-believes' so that it is a kind of illusion that a two-place "x Fs y" differs from one-place "x self-Fs". We cannot treat 'self-believes' as a separate one-place predicate ̂β — which would be thoroughly extensional and thus without that odd place-fusion — because just like 'self-shaves' and 'self-admires' are not independent of 'shaves' and 'admires', respectively, 'self-believes' is not independent of 'believes', but definable by means of it: ∀ z(ζβ ≡ zx(ξβx)).

Now, those who think that examples like DS indicate that there are de se beliefs, to be separated from ordinary kind of beliefs, should reason in the following manner: Examples like "Brutus shaves Brutus", as opposed to "Brutus shaves himself", show that there are two kinds of shaving. "Look, there is a concept of de dicto shaving, or shaving simpliciter, and then there is a concept of de se shaving, and these must be kept separate; de se shavings are not necessarily shavings simpliciter." This sounds rather absurd. The contention that there are no such separate concepts, or distinct modes of shaving, but only distinct ways of expressing that somebody shaves somebody,
is surely more plausible. Just as the concept of shaving stays constant in (12) and (12h), so does that of believing in DD, DS and DR.

8. Conclusion

After all this, it may be inquired, impatiently: Yes, yes, but, (i), what does it mean to believe that one oneself is rich. (ii) What is that "thing" one believes in believing this? (iii) What are the truth-conditions of a statement like DS? Starting with (iii), i.e. the question of "truth-conditions", I would say that (e.g.) DS is true whenever Privatus (competently, reflectively and sincerely) assents to "I am rich" (or to some proper translation of this). If, on the other hand, it is a formal system one is after in the inquiry (iii) — a system in which statements of the form DD* and DS* receive different truth-conditions — I must admit that I have no such system to offer (but I am confident that it can be done — the philosophical literature is filled with demonstrations that one can set up a goal and then develop a formal system in which that goal is reached).

For (ii), I think the question itself presupposes that what is believed is an object of some sort, that is, that beliefs have a "propositional object" (with 'proposition' taken very widely). In connection with DS, this presupposition practically forces one to accept something like "first-person propositions". I think the ascriptions of "self-regarding beliefs" raises some doubts as to the plausibility of this presupposition that a "thing" is always believed. Perhaps e.g. (1D) says just that Decius assigns loyalty to somebody "under" a •Caesar's sidekick•, (2R) that Decius assigns loyalty to somebody "under" some singular term designating Brutus, and DS that Privatus self-assigns loyalty.

Turning then to (i), one cannot be sure what the inquirer is after. If no other account of the "meaning" of de se ascriptions does not satisfy him or her than those involving "first-person propositions", or "de se beliefs", or "indirect attribution", I have nothing more to say. But perhaps it is felt that the present account is only a technical trick, leaving out something important, since it does not answer the question, what it is to believe that oneself is F. Perhaps so. But I hope I have at least shown above that a neutral, non-committing account of the ascriptions of "self-regarding-beliefs" is available. This account might serve as a basis for the "logic of de se belief ascriptions". If it is agreed that the correct logical form of such ascriptions is given in DS* above, some headway is made in the messy topic of de se.
Notes

2. More precisely expressed, there is no pair among DD, DR and DS such that the members of this pair are equivalent with each other.
4. I shall use 'DD', 'DR' and 'DS', not only to designate the specific ascriptions DD, DR and DS above, but also to refer in general to de dicto, de re and de se ascriptions these exemplify.
5. See e.g. Castañeda 1966 (130n, 139), 1967b (11-2).
6. And possibly also from belief de re, if there is such a thing separable from the ordinary kind of belief; cf. e.g. Burge 1977, and e.g. Rozemond 1993 and Bar-Elli 1994 for recent discussions.
7. I shall propose that de se ascriptions resemble de dicto, rather than de re, ascriptions.
8. See Chisholm 1981 (esp. 1-2, 27-32, 107); 1986 (15-23). Chisholm's and Lewis' contention that DR is a special case of DS is odd: Special cases should be viewed as being obtained from more general cases by imposing some restrictions on them; and both the fact that DS entails DR but not vice versa, and the statement that in DS we have a direct attribution while in DR a direct or indirect one, show that if there is a relation of being a special case between DR and DS, DS is a special case of DR rather than vice versa.
9. See Chisholm 1986 (19, 23), 1981 (2); Lewis 1979 (esp. 519-22). Chisholm states, for example, that by means of his theory, "[w]e can explicate [the] distinction [between DR and DS] ... which otherwise remains unexplained" (Chisholm 1986, 23).
10. DS above would then be a "de dicto de se ascription".
11. See e.g. Sellars 1954 (326-34, 341-50), 1963 (229-48), 1968 (esp. 79-90), 1979 (esp. 86-95).
12. See e.g. Sellars 1969, 1973 (esp. 155f.).
13. Formal renderings used in this paper should not be taken too seriously. I employ them only as an aid for presenting some distinctions as perspicuously as possible.
14. D. Davidson's (1969) famous paratactic account of 'saying that' can be seen as a version of Sellars' theory, as applied to oratio obliqua.
15. Sellars-purists may be less that fully satisfied with my presentation of Sellars' views. However, I only claim to have presented a roughly Sellarsian theory.
16. Dummett 1973 (264-77); see also Dummett 1981 (144-7). I hope I have understood Dummett's complicated treatment correctly.

17. Undoubtedly, Frege would prefer to write "L" as \(^{\ast}\)L(\(\xi\)) in order to indicate that 'is loyal' is "incomplete" or "unsaturated". See e.g. Frege 1891, 1893 (§9).


19. This is not to say that (3) cannot be dealt with in a Fregean manner at all. Of course this can be done: (3) is \(\exists x(T_bx \& B_dx)\).

20. Perhaps a better formulation of this is obtained by borrowing a bit from Sellars, to get: Decius believes what he grasps and expresses by a "Caesar's sidekick is loyal".

21. Sellarsians could probably deal with DS analogously.


24. Of course, these remarks are rather casual, but I shall not go into these matters more deeply here. Cf. e.g. Seymour 1994, 18-20.


26. Let us stipulate that throughout this example, 'watches' is to be taken totally "non-intensionally" or "extensionally". On this conception watching is veridical (if \(a\) watches \(b\), \(b\) is there) and substitution-allowing (if \(b=c\) and "\(a\) watches \(b\)" is true, so is "\(a\) watches \(c\)").

27. It is a common-sense principle that if somebody dissents from "S", we can truly say that he or she does not believe that S. This principle was actually used in section 1 above in the story purporting to show that DD does not follow from DS. (I am not convinced of the validity of this dissent principle.)

28. Perhaps (11) is not so problematic after all: Being an instance of "Moore's paradox of saying and disbelieving", it is not inconsistent but only unassertible (see Moore 1942 (543), 1944 (204); and e.g. Williams 1996, with references to the literature).


30. For if both Brutus and Cassius shaved themselves and no one but Brutus shaved Brutus, then "Only Brutus shaved Brutus" is true but "Only Brutus shaved himself" false; and if both Brutus and Cassius shaved Brutus and no one but Brutus shaved himself, then "Only Brutus shaved Brutus" is false but "Only Brutus shaved himself" true. See also Geach 1975 (141).
31. Here are some other examples of 'auto-' and 'self-': auto-destructive, autohypnotise, self-aware, self-contradict, self-deceive, self-ignite, self-mocking, self-neglect, self-protective, self-quotiation, self-respect, self-supported, self-taught, self-trained, etc.

32. If 'Sx' is a formula with only 'x' as a free variable, then 'λxSx', its λ-transform, is a one-place predicate which designates the property of being S. For example, if 'S' and 'T' are predicate symbols, then 'λx(Sx & Tx)' designates the property of being-S-and-(T-to-b). In general, if 'Sx1...xn' is a formula with only x1,...,xn as free variables, then 'λx1...xnSx1...xn' denotes the n-ary relation S.


34. M. Richard (e.g. 1983, 1987, 1987b, 1990 (esp. 208-19)), N. Salmon (e.g. 1986, 1989) and S. Soames (e.g. 1987, 1987b, 1990) have discussed extensively the issue of arity in connection with belief ascriptions. However, of these writers only Richard (1983) has attended to de se ascriptions.

35. In the usual manner, '[...]/S[a]' is obtained from '[...]/S[x]' by replacing every occurrence of 'x' in '[...]/S[x]' with 'a'.

36. If AD is true, the (possible) requirement of epistemic intimacy is probably met.


38. Cf. also, "Bill wants to marry the richest débutante in Dubuque" as opposed to "Bill wants Bill to marry the richest débutante in Dubuque". (Cf. Neale 1990, 154-5n6, 205n3.)

39. I intend 'assigns' to be taken intensionally. (Perhaps I should say also that I use 'assigns' as a technical term, attaching to it only a sense that "corresponds to believing".)

40. On the other hand, a defender of Castañeda may point out that, on the contrary, the analysis given above proves that he was right, for he only stated that "he*" cannot be replaced by any "normal" singular terms — and in the present analysis it is not so replaced!

41. Of course, Sellars, who utilizes signs in his analysis of belief ascriptions, is in the same jam: E.g. 'Privatus-himself' in DS should refer to a sign and a nonsign at the same time.

42. Perhaps this is an inaccurate, or even mistaken, way to put things. Should we rather say that the reference shift is, for Frege, the explanation of opacity?

43. As D. Davidson famously contends in Davidson 1969 (esp. 347).

44. Cf. Geach 1962, 140-1.
45. By the same token, there should probably be separate \textit{de re} shavings as well.

46. So, perhaps I have been too harsh on Chisholm and Lewis above; their respective accounts are laudable at least in \textit{trying} to dispense with "propositions".

47. For DS, perhaps we could also say that Decius assigns loyalty to somebody "under" no designation at all. Cf. Anscombe 1975.

48. I wish to thank Tapio Korte for reading and commenting on this paper.

\textit{References}


SEYMOUR, M. 1994, "Indirect Discourse and Quotation", *Philosophical Studies* 74(1), 1-38.


