

SCHIFFER'S PUZZLE:

A KIND OF FREGEAN RESPONSE

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(Penultimate Draft)

In 'What Reference Has to Tell Us about Meaning,' Stephen Schiffer argues that many of the objects of our beliefs, and the contents of our assertoric speech acts, have what he calls *the relativity feature*.¹ A proposition has the relativity feature just in case it is an object-dependent proposition "the entertainment of which requires different people, or the same person at different times or places, to think of [the relevant object] in different ways" (129).² But as no Fregean or Russellian proposition can possibly have such a feature, we must either (i) give up on these traditional theories of propositional content in favor of an account that can allow for the relativity feature, or else (ii) explain why the things we believe, and say, oftentimes *seem* to have this feature even though they, in fact, do not. Schiffer pursues the former option; in what follows, I pursue the latter.

¹ 'What Reference Has to Tell Us about Meaning' was published in an excellent, but difficult to obtain volume edited by J. Branquinho entitled *Conteúdo e Cognição. Anais da série de seminários de Filosofia Analítica* in 2005. It is a true shame that Schiffer's paper is not more widely known, and more easily accessible. Like all of Schiffer's work in the theory of meaning and content, it deserves careful study from anyone with even a passing interest in these topics. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent references will be to this work.

² Schiffer later 'tightens' this characterization as follows:

A proposition p has the relativity feature iff p is an x -dependent proposition such that there are properties Φ and Ψ and ways of thinking w and w' of x such that (i) $w \neq w'$, (ii) a person who has Φ can entertain p only if she thinks of x in way w , and (iii) a person who has Ψ can only entertain p if he thinks of x in way w' . (134)

The particular response to the puzzle posed by the relativity feature that I will sketch is one that I suspect Schiffer himself might have once been tempted to make; a response that will (I hope) be of interest to any theorist sympathetic to the view that the contents of our beliefs are fine-grained, Fregean propositions.³ To be clear, however, my goal in trying to explain away the relativity feature is *not* to vindicate the traditional Fregean account of content and communication: like Schiffer, I believe that account to be problematic. As we will see, even if we assume the metaphysical thesis that *believing* is fundamentally a relation between agents and Fregean propositions, there is considerable pressure for denying that such propositions are either the contents of our assertoric speech acts, or the things we refer to, or specify, by that-clauses in belief-reports. In response to Schiffer's puzzle the proponent of the Fregean metaphysics of beliefs should, I argue, hold that that the things we assert, and the referents of that-clauses, are not Fregean propositions, but rather *kinds* thereof.

1. The Relativity Feature

If I sincerely and literally utter (1), I will have said that I am hungry, and, in so doing, made manifest a certain belief of mine—a belief I would report using (3):

1. I am hungry.
2. By uttering (1), I said that I am hungry.
3. I believe that I am hungry.

The complications that lead Schiffer to this refinement will not concern us in what follows, and, as such, we can stick to his formulation of the relativity feature in the text.

³ In particular, the view that I will suggest is motivated, in large part, by Schiffer's work in the late 70s and early 80s in the theory of reference, especially Schiffer (1981). See fn. 12.

If you understand my utterance, you will entertain what I said. Supposing you are prepared to take my word on the matter, you will come to have a certain belief regarding me as well—a belief that I would report using (4):

4. You believe that I am hungry.

Prima facie, there is something—namely, *that I am hungry*—that I said by uttering (1), and that we both believe. We can start to appreciate Schiffer’s puzzle by trying to get clearer on what, exactly, this ‘something’ is.

Proponents of *the face-value theory* will agree that the ‘something’ in question is a proposition—an abstract, mind- and language-independent entity that has truth-conditions essentially and without relativization to anything else.⁴ According to these theorists, both propositional attitude reports and reports of assertoric speech acts express relations between agents and propositions referred to, or specified by, that-clauses. More specifically, a face-value theorist is committed to the following two (interrelated, but separable) theses:

The Semantic Thesis: In a literal utterance of a report of the form ‘*S* believes/says that *p*’ the that-clause functions as a *referential singular term*, the semantic value of which is a proposition, the report being true just in case the proposition is something *S* believes or asserts.⁵

⁴ See Schiffer (2003), Chapter 1, for some of the motivations for the face-value view.

⁵ Here, and throughout, I am using ‘believes’ as the paradigmatic cognitive attitude and ‘saying’ and ‘meaning’ for the paradigmatic speech act verbs that take that-clauses as arguments.

The Metaphysical Thesis: Believing, saying, and meaning are genuinely propositional attitudes—relations between agents and propositions.

If these theses are correct, the says-that report in (2) is true just in case I stand in the saying-relation to the proposition specified by ‘that I am hungry’ (at the context); likewise, the belief report in (4) is true if, and only if, you stand in the belief relation to that same proposition.

Let’s provisionally follow the face-value theorist in accepting both of the foregoing theses, and that the that-clause in (2)–(4) specifies the proposition that I said by uttering (1). Now supposing the ‘something’ in question is a proposition specified by the relevant that-clause, we would still like to know what kind of proposition it is.

Though proponents of the face-value theory might disagree among themselves regarding any number of further issues, they will (or at least should) agree that in (1)–(4) the proposition in question is an *object-dependent proposition*—a proposition the truth conditions of which can only be specified by mentioning the particular object(s) that it concerns. Plausibly, what I said in uttering (1) is something true at a world w just in case, at w , Ray Buchanan has the property of being hungry.

So far, so good. Things start to get puzzling, however, when we notice that—seemingly—in order for me to believe, or entertain, that I am hungry it is not enough for me merely to have a thought concerning some individual that happens to be me (perhaps, a thought concerning that guy in the mirror across from me in the restaurant that I do not recognize to be me). Rather, I must think of myself *as such*—that is, in a distinctively first-person, self-conscious way, a way that neither you nor anyone else can think of me. Insofar as this object-dependent proposition that I am hungry seems to require me, but not you, to think of me in a first-person way, it has what Schiffer calls *the relativity feature*.

The relativity feature also seems to be exhibited by just about any utterance involving a demonstrative. Suppose that on your suggestion I am visiting our favorite local art gallery to check out a new sculpture entitled *D'Odeurs et de Chatouilles*. While standing in front of the sculpture, I call you and say:

5. That sculpture is magnificent!

Supposing that I am speaking literally, and being sincere in so doing, I will have both said and expressed my belief that *that sculpture is magnificent*—a belief that you share. Plausibly, what I said, and what we both believe, is an object-dependent proposition concerning a particular sculpture, *s*. Prima facie, in order for me to believe, or even entertain, that proposition I must think of *s* under an occurrent perceptual demonstrative mode of presentation, but not so for you: if anything, you must think of *s* under a memory-based mode of presentation, since you are not at the moment positioned to see it. Hence, what I said in uttering (5), and what we both believe, seems to have the relativity feature.

The foregoing two examples are cases in which different agents (seemingly) must think of the same object in different ways in order to entertain a certain object-dependent proposition. There are, however, also cases in which we seem to have an object-dependent proposition, concerning some specific object *o*, that requires the *same agent*, at different times or places, to think of *o* under different ‘modes of presentation’ (more about this possibility momentarily).

In presenting such an example, we would do well to first get a little bit clearer on what we might call the *semantic content* of an utterance, and how that relates to ‘what is said.’ Following Schiffer, let’s take the context-invariant meaning, or *character**, of a sentence-type σ to be a constraint on “what a speaker must mean in uttering [σ], if she’s to be speaking literally” (131), a constraint

that we might, in turn, think of as a propositional ‘form,’ or *propositional-type*.⁶ For example, by uttering (6), I might mean both (i) that David is not ready for our dance party, and (ii) that we should postpone the dance party for one more round of drinks:

6. David isn’t ready.

But though I meant (ii) by uttering (6), we should have no temptation to claim that this is something I *stated*, or *literally meant* by uttering (6). Intuitively, (i) ‘fits,’ or is ‘consonant with’ the character* of the sentence-type displayed in (6) in a way that (ii) is not. Following Schiffer, let’s say that when the meaning of the sentence σ is a proposition-type Ψ , and a speaker S means some proposition q of the type Ψ in an unembedded utterance of σ , then q is the **semantic content** of S ’s utterance of σ (131). Moreover, let’s also follow Schiffer in holding that if q is the semantic content of S ’s utterance of σ , then, necessarily, q is *among* the things S **said** by σ . Note that it does **not** follow from the fact that the speaker can truly be reported as having said that p by uttering σ , that p is the semantic content of that utterance. For example, in a conversation in which it is mutual knowledge between me and you that David is wearing sneakers, I might truly report the bouncer as having said that *that David will not be let in to the club*, by uttering (7):

7. No one wearing sneakers will be let in the club.

though that is not the semantic content of his utterance. We should allow that even if “ p is the semantic content of a speaker’s utterance, the speaker may be correctly reported as having said

⁶ See Schiffer (2003) for more on characters*. See Bach (1994), Buchanan (2012), and Neale (2004) for more on proposition-types, -templates, or “forms.”

another proposition q , if q is appropriately related to p , where there is more than one way of being ‘appropriately related.’” (131). In uttering (7), I correctly reported the bouncer as having said both that no one wearing sneakers will be let in the club and that David will not be let in the club, but only the former is the semantic content of his utterance.

With these distinctions in hand, now consider the following case. Suppose that we get an email from the secretary of our distinguished colleague and X-Phi enthusiast, Pergola, in which he explains to us why Pergola will be unable to attend the faculty meeting scheduled for later this afternoon. It reads:

8. Professor Pergola is conducting experiments in the university cafeteria today.

It is plausible that the semantic content of (8) is an object-dependent proposition concerning, among other things, a particular day, d (a proposition that we could express tomorrow by uttering ‘Professor Pergola was conducting experiments in the university yesterday’). But notice that if we read Pergola’s email *today*, we have to think of d as *such* in order to entertain, or believe, that object-dependent proposition—that we must think of d as (roughly) *this very day, the day it is now*. Supposing we re-read the email tomorrow we can, of course, entertain that same object-dependent proposition expressed by (8) once again. Seemingly, in order to entertain what Pergola’s assistant expressed yesterday would now require us to think of d as, roughly, *the day before this very day*. Since the object-dependent proposition expressed by (8) is such that it requires agents to think of the referent of ‘today’ in different ways, at different times, it too seems to have Schiffer’s relativity feature.

Each of the foregoing examples seems to dramatically exhibit the relativity feature, and it is easy to construct others. Schiffer claims that “the relativity feature can be had by the semantic content of an utterance involving almost any kind of singular term” (134). If the relativity feature is

in fact a property of the semantic content of any utterance, then it is plausibly a property of many, if not most. Crucially, however, if the relativity feature is *ever* instantiated then both the Fregean and Direct-reference versions of the face-value account are incorrect.

2. Direct Reference and the Relativity Feature

Qua face-value theorists, Direct-Reference theorists and Fregeans each accept both the semantic thesis, and the metaphysical thesis. Moreover, they are agreed that the objects of our beliefs, and the contents of our assertoric speech acts are *structured* propositions in that they are complexes with constituents, the identity and arrangement of which are determinative of their truth-conditions. They differ, however, in their respective views as to the nature of these propositional constituents. While the Direct-Reference theorist holds that a proposition is composed of the objects, properties, and relations that figure in its truth-conditions, the Fregean holds that it is composed of *modes of presentation* thereof. In this section, we will consider the relativity feature in the context of the Direct Reference account, in the next, in the context of the Fregean account.

A Direct-Reference (DR) theorist is any proponent of the face-value theory that holds that (i) the propositions we believe and assert are *Russellian* propositions—structured complexes of objects, properties, and relations, and (ii) the propositional contribution of a referring expression is exhausted by its referent; the propositional contribution of a predicate, the property it expresses. I will assume that this view, and the motivations for it forthcoming from the work of Kaplan, Salmon, Soames, and others are, more or less, familiar.

Returning to our initial example of (1)–(4), the DR theorist will hold that the semantic content of my utterance of (1) is, to a first approximation, a singular, Russellian proposition that has me, Ray Buchanan, as a constituent, as well as the property expressed by ‘is hungry’:

1*. <Ray Buchanan, the property of being hungry>

The DR theorist will also claim that this singular proposition is the referent of the that-clause in both (2) and (4), and, hence, both something I said, and something we both believe. Similarly, (1*) will also be claimed to be the semantic content of my literal utterances (9) and (10):

9. That guy is hungry. [Demonstrating myself in a mirror]

10. Ray Buchanan is hungry.

While the sentence-types displayed (9) and (10) might differ in character* from that displayed in (1), any utterance thereof will, according to the DR theorist, semantically express one and the same singular proposition. Further, the DR theorist will claim that, if I believe the semantic content of my utterance of (1), I thereby believe what is expressed by my utterances of (9) and (10) as well.

Consequently, given that (3) is true, so too is (11):

3. I believe that I am hungry.

11. I believe that Ray Buchanan is hungry

If the that-clauses in (3) and (11) refer to the same singular proposition, these reports cannot diverge in truth-value.

As should already be clear, a singular proposition such as (1*) does not have the relativity feature. Insofar as (11) might be true even if I believe that I am not Ray (perhaps, I am suffering from amnesia), the singular proposition (1*) does not have the relativity feature. But if the DR theorist is correct, *that* proposition just is the proposition I believe if (3) is true. As such, the DR

theorist must hold that what I said by uttering (1), and what we both believe if (3) and (4) are true, does not, and cannot, have the relativity feature (137). It takes little ingenuity to see that, more generally, no Russellian proposition—singular, or otherwise—can have the relativity feature.

As Schiffer points out, the DR theorist can explain away the appearance of the relativity feature only if she can explain away the very familiar worries for her view posed by Frege's puzzle (138). For example, the belief-reports in (3) and (11) can, intuitively, differ in truth-value, despite the predictions of the DR account to the contrary (again, I might have undergone amnesia and forgotten that I am Ray Buchanan). Accounting for the mismatch between her theory's predictions and the intuitions of competent speakers regarding the truth-conditions of belief-reports such as (3) and (11) is only part of the challenge faced by the DR theorist. To appreciate one especially pressing such further worry, suppose that while we are at the restaurant, I mistake the mirror just to our left for a clear window. Gesturing towards a man in the mirror that I do not recognize to be me, I sincerely, literally, and competently utter (12):

12. I do not believe that he is hungry, but I believe that I am hungry.

For the DR theorist, however, (12) is an explicit contradiction, equivalent to (13):

13. I do not believe that I am hungry, but I believe that I am hungry.

The DR theorist must explain not only how it is possible for an utterance such as (13) to be literally true, she must also make it plausible that a competent, reflective speaker might *rationally* assert such a contradiction (138). This is no easy task.⁷

Like Schiffer, I am skeptical that the DR theorist can ultimately give a plausible response to the problems posed by Frege-cases, and, as such, that she can explain away the appearance of the relativity feature either. For now, I will follow Schiffer in taking it as a working hypothesis that the apparent counter-examples are genuine and that, as such, direct-reference semantics “can’t be part of any correct way of explaining away the relativity feature” (139). Moreover, I will further assume that the difficulties facing the DR-theorists show that the truth-conditions of belief-reports such as (13) are, in some sense, and in some cases, ‘sensitive’ to the *modes of presentation* under which an agent thinks of the objects and properties which her belief concerns. In the meanwhile, I encourage fans of direct reference semantics to be patient—the view I will eventually sketch in response to Schiffer’s puzzle has the wherewithal to reconstruct singular, Russellian propositions when, and where, we might find a need for them.

3. Fregeans and the Relativity Feature

In contrast to the DR theorist, Fregeans hold that the propositional objects of our beliefs and the contents of our assertions must be individuated in terms of the *modes of presentation* under which we think of the objects, properties, and relations that figure in their truth-conditions. According to the Fregean, an agent might (rationally) have multiple beliefs to the effect that a particular object x is F which nevertheless differ in propositional content. A Fregean can allow, for example, that Lois

⁷ For some further worries regarding DR accounts of content see Schiffer (1987b), (1992), and (2006). For some DR-responses to Schiffer (2006), see Braun (2006) and Salmon (2006), as well as Schiffer’s most recent response to Salmon (this volume).

Lane's belief that Superman lives in Metropolis can (contra the DR-theorist) differ in content from her belief that Clark Kent lives in Metropolis (which in turn, might differ in content from her belief that that guy on TV lives in Metropolis, even if that guy is Superman/Clark). Likewise, a Fregean can, and will, claim that I might truly utter 'I do not believe that he is hungry, but I believe that I am hungry' so long as the two that-clauses refer to distinct modes of presentation (MOP) involving propositions. This is a good thing.

While Fregean accounts come in many varieties, these theorists will agree—or at least should agree—that whatever else MOPs might be, they must meet the following two constraints:

Frege's Constraint: Necessarily, if m is a MOP under which a minimally rational person x believes a thing to be F, then it is not the case that x also believes y not to be F under m . If x believes y to be F and also believes y not to be F, then there are distinct MOPs m and m' such that x believes y to be F under m and disbelieves y to be F under m' .

The Criterion of Sameness: If m is a complete MOP, then one cannot have two beliefs such that (1) both are beliefs that a thing x is F under m , and such that the two beliefs differ in internal functional role. (Schiffer 1978: 180–1)

Here, the *functional role of a belief* is intended to pick out what we might call the 'internal' functional profile of a belief state—i.e., the relations, actual and counterfactual, which that state bears to other mental states of the person which has that belief. According to the Fregean, MOPs are those components of the content of a belief that secures that it has a functional role in accord with the foregoing constraints. Of course, the Fregean will ultimately have to provide us with a metaphysical

account of what, exactly, MOPs are.⁸ For our purposes, we will not worry too much about the metaphysics, and simply take MOPs to be *whatever it is that plays the MOP-role*; that is, whatever it is that meets the foregoing constraints, be they *individual concepts, dossiers of information, conceptual roles of expressions in a language of thought*, or what have you.⁹ For now, note that it is plausible that on any way of spelling out the notion, MOPs will likely be highly idiosyncratic and vary significantly from agent to agent. MOPs are introduced to capture an agent's *ways of thinking* of the objects, properties, and relations her belief concerns and there are, of course, many (many) cognitively non-equivalent ways of thinking of one and the same object and/or property.

Fregeans can, and should, allow that a MOP can be *irreducibly* object-, or property-, dependent, and cannot be identified, or individuated, without citing the object, or property, of which it is an MOP.¹⁰ As Schiffer points out, a Fregean who takes this line can hold that 'the Fregean proposition $\langle m, m' \rangle$, where m is an x -dependent mode of presentation of x , and m' is an F-ness-dependent mode of presentation of F-ness, would be . . . truth-conditionally equivalent to, but distinct from the direct-reference theorist's Russellian singular proposition $\langle x, \text{Fness} \rangle$ ' (140). The Fregean who accepts this suggestion should claim that many of our demonstrative and/or perceptual beliefs essentially involve such object-dependent MOPs.

Returning to (1)–(4), it is clear that the Fregeans can countenance an abundance of extremely fine-grained, object-dependent propositions concerning me, Ray, to the effect that Ray is hungry. Indeed, there are as many such Fregean propositions as there are cognitively non-equivalent ways of thinking of me. (Within this plurality of propositions there will be a Fregean proposition that contains a first-person, self-conscious, MOP that I, and I alone, might think of myself under.) What

⁸ See Schiffer (1987a), Chapter 3, for some of the difficulties in saying what, exactly, MOPs are.

⁹ For the record, I am sympathetic to the view that MOPs are to be understood in terms of the conceptual roles of expressions in Mentalese, where conceptual role is modeled in the manner suggested by Field (1977).

¹⁰ See, for example, Bach (1987), Chapter One, Evans (1982), McDowell (1984) for more on *de re* MOPs.

the Fregean cannot give us, however, is a proposition with Schiffer's relativity feature. Here is Schiffer:

If an x -dependent proposition has the relativity feature, then there is no one mode of presentation of x under which everyone who entertains the proposition must think of x , whenever or wherever the entertaining takes place. Fregean propositions, however, *do require each x -dependent proposition to contain a mode of presentation of x under which anyone, at any time or place, who entertains the proposition must think of x .* (140, italics mine)

Not only can the Fregean not provide us with a proposition that has Schiffer's relativity feature, the italicized requirement above makes it independently doubtful that the semantic content of (virtually) any literal utterance containing a referring expression is ever an object-dependent Fregean proposition. As Schiffer put it elsewhere, the real problem is that:

. . . while understanding what's said in an utterance typically *constrains* how the communicators must think of the things the utterance is about, it's extremely rare for such understanding to require them to think of those things in exactly the same way . . . what is the mode of presentation of Mexico City and the one mode of presentation of Los Angeles under which you and I are thinking of those two cities when I say to you, 'Mexico City has a much worse smog problem than Los Angeles.?'¹¹

¹¹ This quote is from Schiffer's 2004 lecture notes at NYU on the material that ultimately led to the 2005 paper that we have been discussing. Also, see Heck (2002) for an excellent discussion of this point in connection to indexicals and demonstratives (more on Heck's views on these topics momentarily).

The worry here is completely general. While it is plausible enough that when I think of, say, the country-singer, Toby Keith, I am doing so under some or other specific MOP, it is implausible in the extreme to suppose that I might mean—literally, or otherwise—a Fregean proposition with that MOP as a constituent when I utter, say, (14):

14. Toby Keith is from Oklahoma.

Insofar as I can reasonably expect to be understood in uttering (14), I cannot mean, or intend to convey, any such proposition—how could I? On what grounds could I expect you, or anyone else, to come to recognize the particular MOP under which I think of Toby Keith on the basis of my utterance of (14), and the facts concerning the common ground between us? The things we mean, and say, are not fine-grained Fregean propositions.

Returning to Schiffer’s puzzle: suffice it to say (for now), no Fregean proposition has the relativity feature. Moreover, in light of Schiffer’s more general worry, I submit that Fregean propositions are not plausible candidates for being the contents of virtually any assertoric utterance, much less those that exhibit the relativity feature.

4. The “No-Semantic-Content” Theory

Neither Fregean propositions, nor the Russellian propositions favored by the DR theorist, have the relativity feature. In coming to appreciate why this is so, we have been reminded of some independent worries with both of these versions of the face-value theory. If we are to explain away Schiffer’s relativity feature, we should try to do so in a way that does not have the problems of these familiar versions of the face-value theory. On the one hand, we would like an account of semantic content, and what is said, that allows for more fineness of grain than the account offered by the DR-

theorist—an account that is, at least potentially, sensitive to how our audiences must think of the objects, and properties, our utterances concern if they are to understand us. (The hope is that such an account could allow for—among other things—the possibility that, say, a literal utterance of ‘Lois believes that Superman flies, but does not believe that Kent does’ could be true.) On the other hand, however, we need contents that are not nearly as fine-grained as those on offer from the proponent of the traditional Fregean account: *those* propositions are so fine-grained as to be all but incommunicable, and that is obviously not a good feature for semantic contents to have.

The prospects for giving such an account might seem extremely bleak. At this point in the dialectic, we no longer have Russellian propositions to appeal to, and we have just seen that Fregean propositions are not especially promising candidates for being semantic contents. If the Russellian is too liberal in its requirements on grasping, the Fregean is too demanding. It’s too easy to share contents on the Russellian view, and too hard—almost impossible in many cases—for the Fregean.

Before we despair we should first consider a neo-Fregean response to Schiffer’s puzzle concerning the relativity feature that he calls the “no-semantic-content theory”:

One way of attempting to [explain away the relativity feature] . . . is to deny that any proposition is the semantic content of my utterance and to hold instead that understanding the utterance requires me and my hearer to entertain different but related propositions. That is to say, as regards my utterance of ‘I’m *F*’, the no-semantic-content theory holds, first, that my literal and serious utterance of ‘I’m *F*’ has no semantic content—that is, that in uttering the sentence I’m not saying *any* proposition which conforms to the meaning of that sentence—but, second, my utterance (i) has a truth-value; (ii) is fully understood by me and my audience; (iii) is such that that understanding requires me and my audience to think of me in different ways (I, but not you, must think of me under the self-conscious mode of

presentation); and (iv) does conform to the meaning of the sentence type ‘I’m *F*’ (it’s just that that meaning can’t be a propositional form which requires the literal speaker who utters the sentence to mean a proposition of that form). (143–144).

This response is, I submit, *the* response for the theorist who holds that the objects of our thoughts are fine-grained, Fregean proposition. In what follows, let’s call any theorist who holds that (a) the objects of our cognitive attitudes are Fregean propositions, (b) but who—in the sense of the foregoing quote—denies that such propositions are the contents of our assertoric speech acts, an *enlightened Fregean* (or a ‘Fregean_E’, for short).

Hints of such an account are littered throughout the writings of neo-Fregeans.¹² McDowell, for example, claims that a proponent of Fregean propositions can, and should, deny that “communication must involve a sharing of [Fregean] thoughts between the communicator and audience” (1998: 222).¹³ Rather, the Fregean should hold that successful communication requires “not shared thoughts but different thoughts that are mutually known to stand in a suitable relation of correspondence” (McDowell 1998: 222).

And while McDowell refrains from explicitly denying that literal utterances involving demonstratives, and/or indexicals, fail to have semantic content, Heck (2002) comes much closer:

¹² Here, I have in mind theorists such as Gareth Evans (1982), Richard Heck (2002), Martin Davies (1982), Graeme Forbes (1987) and (1990), and John McDowell (1998). A would-be proponent of the no-semantic-content thesis will also find considerable inspiration in Schiffer’s own 1981 paper entitled ‘Indexicals and the Theory of Reference.’ In that work, Schiffer argued that while the Frege/Russell theory of content is plausible as an account of “the thought in the mind of a speaker using a singular term” (‘Indexicals and the Theory of Reference,’ 49), it fails as an account of the things we mean, and say, by uttering sentences containing indexicals and demonstratives. Schiffer argued that while the semantic content of a literal utterance of the form ‘*t* is *G*’ (where ‘*t*’ is a referring expression) will be a singular, Russellian proposition, such a proposition is not, and could not be, the “complete content” of the belief in the mind of the speaker making that utterance. On this view—like the “enlightened Fregean” view to be sketched below—there is a fundamental asymmetry between the things we say, and mean, and the contents of our beliefs. See Neale (this volume) for an interesting discussion of Schiffer’s account of speaker-reference offered in that paper.

¹³ Schiffer (2005) also cites both the McDowell material and the quote by Heck to follow, as well.

If one really wants to find something to call *the* meaning [of such an utterance], then perhaps what is common to the cognitive values the utterance has for different speakers is as good a choice as any. But why do we want to find something to call the meaning? What we (relatively) uncontroversially have are speakers who associate Thoughts [i.e., specific thought contents] with utterances and restrictions on how the different Thoughts must be related if they are to communicate successfully . . . (Heck 2002: 27)

(Here, Heck presumably means ‘the semantic content of an utterance’ in speaking of “*the* meaning” thereof, and by “thoughts” he means Fregean propositions.) For the Fregean_E, the problems posed by Schiffer’s relativity feature are not so much a worry for the Fregean account of indexical or demonstrative *thoughts*; rather, they are problems for overly simplistic ‘thought-sharing’ conceptions of linguistic communication.

While McDowell, Heck, and other neo-Fregeans have been moved towards the no-semantic-content account from problems posed by indexicals and demonstratives, such an account should be of much more general appeal to the fan of Fregean propositions in light of the worry raised in Section Three: namely, that such propositions are virtually always too fine-grained to be plausible candidates for being the contents of assertion. A fan of Fregean propositions *should* be every bit as sympathetic to the no-semantic-content account for utterances involving, say, proper names as they are for indexicals. That is, the Fregean_E should hold a speaker will no more mean, or assert, a Fregean proposition by uttering, say, ‘Mexico City has a much worse smog problem than Los Angeles’ than she will by an utterance of (1), (5), or any other of the cases we have considered involving indexicals and demonstratives.

The fan of Fregean propositions who adopts the no-semantic-content theory will hold that successful linguistic communication can be achieved by the speaker and her audience coming to have, distinct, yet appropriately related Fregean thoughts. What exactly could this amount to? Insofar as understanding a speaker *S*'s utterance requires (at least minimally) recognizing her meaning-intentions, we are owed a story regarding *S*'s meaning intentions that allows that it is indeed possible for *S*'s audience to understand her by entertaining something suitably similar to the Fregean thought she 'had in mind' in producing her utterance. In the case of my utterance of (1), for example, the content of my meaning intention cannot simply be *that you entertain a thought suitably similar to my thought p*, where *p* is the Fregean content of my first person thought. Recognition of *that* intention would require you to do something that Frege's account of indexical thoughts all but entails cannot be done—namely, it requires you to share the content of my private, un-shareable thought. What then should the Fregean_E say?

Stepping back, the Fregean_E holds that many literal utterances will fail to have a 'semantic content' in the sense in which that notion was introduced in Section One. She will hold that, in typical cases, there is no proposition of the kind she is willing to countenance (i.e. Fregean propositions) that a speaker means, or asserts. But crucially, there is nothing to preclude her from theorizing about 'what' the speaker meant—literally, or otherwise—by an utterance so long as what is meant/asserted is not, itself, a Fregean proposition.¹⁴ Whatever the things we mean turn out to be, they had better be such that different speakers can entertain, or believe, them in virtue of having distinct Fregean thoughts if they are going to be of help to Schiffer's worries concerning the relativity feature.

¹⁴ Heck, as we have seen, allows for this possibility, but claims that the Fregean *does not need* any notion of semantic content (at least in utterances involving demonstratives and indexicals).

There are several possibilities here, but I'll just suggest the one to which I am most partial.¹⁵

Consider (15):

15. Fichte was born in Upper Lusatia.

Notice that a Fregean proposition might have any number of properties. It might have the property of being Barack Obama's favorite proposition, it might have the property of being controversial among people who own pugs, and so on. A Fregean proposition might also, of course, have the complex property of being about a certain man, Fichte, and true only if he was born in Upper Lusatia. Call this property Ψ . On behalf of the Fregean_E, I suggest that in uttering 'Fichte was born in Upper Lusatia.' the speaker does not mean any particular Fregean proposition; rather *what* she is putting forward is Ψ . So long as her audience comes to entertain a suitably similar Fregean proposition—namely, one that *is* Ψ —on the basis of her utterance, understanding can be achieved. This thing—the *Fregean proposition-type* Ψ —is, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to the singular proposition <Fichte, the property of being born in Upper Lusatia>. But there is nothing to preclude the Fregean_E from holding that, in a particular context of utterance, the relevant proposition-type is more finely-grained: perhaps the relevant proposition-type in question is one that is just like Ψ , except further requires thinking of Fichte *by that name*, or *as a philosopher*, or what have you.

Interestingly, the Fregean_E can also allow that in some cases the relevant type is not, in any sense, equivalent to a proposition of any stripe. This would occur when the speaker's audience might fully understand her utterance in virtue of coming to entertain any one, or more, Fregean propositions *which themselves have different possible worlds truth-conditions*. Elsewhere, I have argued that

¹⁵ I develop this suggestion in my (2010) and (2012).

such cases abound.¹⁶ But for present purposes, let's only consider the simpler cases in which each of the Fregean propositions of the relevant type have the same modal profile. In these cases, at least, we might claim that a literal utterance in which a speaker means/asserts such a Fregean proposition-type is true just in case each of the propositions of that type are themselves true.

Returning to the first example in Section One, the theorist who takes up the suggestion just offered might hold that in uttering (1) I literally meant a Fregean proposition-type, Φ , instantiated by all and only those Fregean propositions with the modal profile of $\langle \text{Ray, the property of being hungry} \rangle$, intending that there be some or other thought of that type that my audience come to entertain on the basis of my utterance. Moreover, given our mutual knowledge of the character* of 'I,' it is plausible that I will further *conventionally signal* that the particular Fregean thought of the Φ -type that, as it were, 'prompted' my utterance was an essentially first person one. In order to understand my utterance of (1) it is not enough for you to come to have a thought concerning me to the effect Ray is hungry. Additionally, you must recognize that I am, by my choice of the first person pronoun 'I,' intentionally providing you evidence concerning the specific proposition of Φ -type that lies behind my utterance; namely, a first-person, *de se*, thought concerning myself. Hence, if you understand my utterance you will both (i) come to entertain a Fregean thought **of** the intended Φ -type, and (ii) recognize that the particular Fregean thought of that type that prompted my utterance was itself essentially *de se*. Regarding (ii), notice that you can know that I have a *de se* thought of the Φ -kind even if you yourself can't have the specific Fregean thought of that kind that you know to have prompted my utterance. More generally, on the suggestion on offer, what a speaker means/says is *a property of Fregean propositions*; her utterance is understood only if her audience comes

¹⁶ See my (2010) for such cases, and a more general argument that speaker-meaning is not a propositional attitude.

to suitably entertain some one, or more, propositions that have the property in question. Such Fregean proposition-types are, as it were, ‘contents’ for the would-be proponent of the no-semantic-content account.

The no-semantic-content theory should (I hope) be of interest to any fan of Fregean propositions. But as we are about to see, any friend of Fregean propositions who adopts this view has much, much work to do.

5. Schiffer’s Worry for the No-Semantic-Content View

Schiffer is skeptical that any version of the no-semantic-content line will solve his puzzle; indeed, he offers a worry that challenges the very coherence of the no-semantic-content account. The principal worry Schiffer has is how to square the claim that, for example, my utterance of ‘I am hungry’ does not express a (Fregean) proposition with the claim that (seemingly) there is one thing—namely, *that I am hungry*—that (i) I said by my utterance, and (ii) that we both believe (144). Reconsider (2) and (3):

2. By uttering (1), I said that I am hungry.
3. I believe that I am hungry.

Presumably, the Fregean_E will hold that in (2) the that-clause does *not* refer to a Fregean proposition. The alternative view—that the that-clause in (2) *does* refer to a Fregean proposition *p*, but *p* cannot be the semantic content of my utterance of (1)—is untenable (145). The crucial question then is how *any* theorist who thinks that *believing* is a relation between agents and propositions—Fregean or otherwise—can coherently hold that the that-clause in (2) does not refer to, or specify, such a proposition. Given the parity of form between (2) and (3), such a theorist would have to also hold that the that-clause in (3) does not refer to a Fregean proposition either—for that matter, it must be

that that-clauses *never* refer to the propositions we believe. The Fregean_E theorist who is driven to this position must tell us how a report of the form ‘*A* believes that *S*’ can possibly be true if the relevant that-clause does not, and cannot, specify something that *A* believes.

The challenge is daunting, and I am honestly not sure how to best try to address it. As far as I can see, however, the Fregean_E’s best response to this challenge will involve denying the presupposition of his question. That is to say, such a theorist should hold that even in true belief-reports of the form ‘*S* believes that *p*’ we do **not** specify what *S* believes. Ever.¹⁷

This might initially sound like a very unpromising line of thought, but any fan of Fregean propositions should be sympathetic. Why? Recall the worry we considered in Section Three regarding the Fregean theory of speech act content. If the traditional Fregean theory of speech act content were correct, then a speaker who literally utters ‘Toby Keith is from Oklahoma’ will have asserted some, or other, proposition containing some specific MOP of Toby. This, as we saw before, is implausible. Notice, however, that an analog of this same problem arises equally with regard to belief reports. On the traditional, face-value, Fregean account of belief reports, a report such as (16) is correct just in case the that-clause in question refers to a Fregean proposition that is among the things the subject—in this case, my little sister, Frances—believes:

16. Frances believes that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma.

The problem here is that I can no more literally refer to a Fregean, MOP-involving proposition by the that-clause in (16) than I can mean, or say, such a proposition by uttering ‘Toby Keith is from Oklahoma.’ Though I know my sister very well, I do not know the particular MOP under which she

¹⁷ The primary inspiration for the suggestion that follows comes from Bach’s seminal (1997) piece entitled ‘Do Belief Reports Report Beliefs?’ See the citations in fn. 19, as well.

thinks of Toby Keith (and this is certainly **not** because she hasn't spoken about him enough to me). But even if I did know the exact MOP under which she thinks of the famous country-singer—say MOP_{4,567}—I would still not be in a position to refer it in uttering (16). What a speaker can refer to in the course of uttering *u* is constrained by what she can reasonably expect her audience to recognize her to have meant on the basis of *u*. In the case of (16), I have no reason whatsoever to suppose that my utterance could put my audience in a position to recognize any particular MOP of Toby that Frances is employing in her belief. (Further, my audience can perfectly well understand my utterance of (16) even if they know less than me about the exact MOP relevant to Frances's belief.) If the Fregean version of the face-value theory were correct, however, my inability to refer to any particular MOP should preclude me from being able to truly utter (16).¹⁸

If the foregoing objection is correct, the traditional Fregean account of belief-*reports* is in trouble. This is not, however, yet to claim that the Fregean *metaphysics* of belief fails. That is, *believing* might be a relation between an agent and a Fregean proposition even if that-clauses in true belief-reports never refer to, or specify, such propositions. How might this go?

The Fregean_E accepts the metaphysical thesis that *believing* is a relation between agents and Fregean propositions. If this metaphysical thesis is correct, then (16), if true, entails that there is *something* that Frances believes, this 'something' being a Fregean proposition. But obviously, the belief-report in (16) tells us more than just this. If (16) is true, we also know quite a bit about the Fregean proposition that Frances believes: among other things, it is a Fregean proposition true at a world *w* just in cases Toby Keith was born in Oklahoma in *w*. Moreover, in a particular context, mutual knowledge concerning my sister's epistemic situation regarding Toby Keith might place further constraints on the nature of the Fregean proposition she believes—for example, that she

¹⁸ See Schiffer (1993: 109–110) in connection to that-clause reference. See my (2012) for further discussion.

must think of him as *a country singer, a gentleman of the South*, or what have you. In a sense to be presently elaborated, the neo-Fregean should claim that the that-clause in (13) serves to *indirectly, and partially, characterize* the Fregean proposition that Frances believes.¹⁹

Building on these observations, the proponent of the no-semantic-content theory should hold that, to a very rough and ready first approximation, the logical form of (16) is given by (16b):

$$16b. \quad \exists p (\Phi p \ \& \ \text{Believes}(\text{Frances}, p))$$

where ' p ' ranges over Fregean propositions and Φ is a contextually relevant property of such propositions. But *prima facie*, this suggestion makes the question regarding the semantic function of the that-clause in (16) even more puzzling. Where did the that-clause go? What contribution could 'that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma' be making to the logical form given in (13b)?

Perhaps the Fregean_E will find some inspiration in a proposal by Francois Recanati (2004) according to which that-clauses are analyzed as *existential quantifiers*. According to this proposal, 'that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma' has the same type of semantic value, as for example, 'some country singer.' On standard accounts, in 'some country singer,' 'some' serves to introduce the existential quantifier, and 'country singer' then provides a restriction on the quantifier so introduced. That-clauses are claimed to function analogously: in a particular context of utterance, the embedded sentence in 'that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma' will have a certain semantic content, Φ , that serves as a restriction on the existential quantifier introduced by 'that.' The that-clause, *qua* existential quantifier, can then combine with a monadic predicate such as 'Frances believes x '—a predicate true

¹⁹ In addition to Bach's article cited in fn. 17, and Recanati's (2004) piece discussed below, see Graff Fara (2003), Forbes (1987), McKinsey (1994), Pollock (1982), Schiffer (1977) and (1978), and Shier (1993) and (1996) for further motivation for such a partial characterization account of propositional attitude reports.

of all and only the propositions Frances believes—to deliver the desired logical form—(16b). On this proposal, that-clauses are, in effect, treated as *properties of monadic propositional attitude properties*. In the case of (16), the that-clause is claimed to express a property instantiated by Frances just in case there is at least one proposition that she believes possessing the contextually specified property Φ . The compositional details of this suggestion might be worked out in any number of different ways.²⁰ For now, however, the point to focus on is this: if Recanati’s suggestion is correct, the Fregean who has been led to this point will have a story regarding that-clauses that is compatible with her claim that (16b) is the logical form of (16). The existential quantification over propositions in (16b) is accounted for by the (putative) fact that that-clauses themselves *are* restricted quantifiers.

²⁰ On standard accounts, ‘some country singer’ is analyzed as expressing the property:

$$(*) \quad \lambda Q \exists x [\text{Country-singer}(x) \ \& \ Q(x)]$$

This second-order property—the property a property P has when P is possessed by at least one entity that is a country singer—is a generalized quantifier. If we abstract away further, we can then isolate the distinct contributions of ‘some’ and ‘country singer’ in (*) revealing that ‘some’ serves to introduce an existential quantifier, and ‘country singer,’ in effect, provides restriction on the quantifier so-introduced. On this analysis, ‘some’ is the following function from properties to generalized quantifiers, such as (*):

$$(*) \quad \lambda P \lambda Q \exists x [P(x) \ \& \ Q(x)]$$

Modifying Recanati’s suggestion for our current purposes, the suggestion would run ‘Frances believes p’ expresses a one-place property of propositions, a property true of all and only the Fregean propositions she believes. ‘That Toby Keith is from Oklahoma’ is also claimed to be a second-order property such as (a) (below). It is a property of monadic propositional attitude properties—properties, like (b), that are true of things just in case they bear the relevant propositional attitude relation to a proposition with the contextually-specified property, Φ .

$$(a) \quad \lambda X \lambda x [(\exists p)(\Phi p \ \& \ X(x,p))]$$

$$(b) \quad \lambda x [(\exists p)(\Phi p \ \& \ \text{Believes}(x,p))]$$

Thus, in (13) the embedded sentence ‘Toby Keith is from Oklahoma’ (plus various contextual factors) serves to specify precisely which property of propositions gets assigned to Φ . We can isolate the contribution of ‘that’ as follows:

$$(c) \quad \lambda \phi \lambda X \lambda x [(\exists p)(\phi p \ \& \ X(x,p))]$$

Recanati's general idea is that in a particular context of utterance the embedded sentence in 'that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma' will have a certain semantic content Φ . The that-clause then serves to quantify over propositions that *have* that semantic content. Different versions of the view will then arise depending upon what one says about the semantic content of the sentence embedded in the that-clause. For example, if one were originally sympathetic to a DR account of the semantic content of 'Toby Keith is from Oklahoma,' the relevant that-clause could be taken as quantifying over an equivalence class of Fregean propositions, all of which are true at a world w , just in case the singular proposition <Toby Keith, the property of being from Oklahoma> is true at w .

More plausibly, however, a proponent of Recanati's suggestion might allow that the semantic content of the embedded sentence is 'pragmatically enriched' in the context of utterance so as to have the force of something akin to 'Toby Keith, *the country singer*, is from Oklahoma.' This latter move would allow the theorist to claim that, for example, (16) can differ in truth-value from (17), even though Toby Keith is Mr. Covel:

17. Frances believes that Mr. Covel is from Oklahoma.

The general idea might be spelled out in any number of different ways. The crucial point for now is that Recanati's suggestion would, if correct, provide the proponent of Fregean propositions a story regarding the semantic function of that-clauses that is compatible with the desired logical form of (16), viz. (16b).

Unfortunately for the Fregean_E, Recanati's suggestion is deeply problematic when we reconsider 'the parity of form' between belief-reports such as (16)/(17), and reports of what is said, and meant:

18. Frances meant/said that Toby Keith is from Oklahoma.

If that-clauses are uniformly analyzed as existential quantifiers, we should expect the logical form of (18) to be analogous to that of the desired logical form of (18) given in (18b):

18b. $\exists p (\Phi p \ \& \ \text{Meant/Said}(\text{Frances}, p))$

But, as Schiffer once pointed out in connection to a similar suggestion due to Graeme Forbes (1987), this prediction is unacceptable.²¹ Suppose that I offer the meaning attribution in (18) on the basis of Frances's uttering 'He is from Oklahoma' while pointing to a picture of Toby wearing a cowboy hat. As we have already seen in Section Three, Frances could not have meant any particular Fregean proposition by her utterance of 'He is from Oklahoma.' Hence, (18) should be false. More generally, given that the contents of our speech acts cannot be identified with Fregean propositions, *all* reports of the form '*S* said/meant that *p*' should be false. But as this is not a desirable result, the Fregean_E needs an alternative story regarding the semantic function of that-clauses compatible with her guiding thought that belief-reports only partially characterize the Fregean propositions we believe—an alternative story compatible with her desire to hold that (15b) is the logical form of (15), but which avoids the foregoing problem regarding attributions of meaning. She needs an account that is compatible with holding that *believing* is a relation to a Fregean proposition, but *saying*, and *meaning*, are not. What might such an account look like?

At this point, I humbly propose that we reconsider the suggestion that I made on behalf of the Fregean_E regarding what we mean, and assert (Section Four). First notice that if (i) *meaning*, *saying*,

²¹ See Schiffer (1992), note 10.

and the like are fundamentally relations to Fregean proposition-types, and (ii) it is (even in principle) possible to report the full content of a speech act by an attribution such as (18), it follows that the orthodox Fregean view of that-clauses is false. What then might the that-clause in a true says-that report such as (18) pick out if not a proposition? Perhaps, we should take the that-clause in (18) to be expressing a two-place relation between speaker and a *proposition-type*, say Φ , which is the semantic value of the that-clause:

18c. Says (Frances, Φ)

In this case, perhaps Φ is a property instantiated by all and only those Fregean propositions true at a world w just in case Toby Keith is from Oklahoma at w and which requires thinking of Toby as a country singer. The proponent of Fregean propositions who adopts this suggestion regarding the logical form of meaning attributions can avoid the problem we encountered for the Recanati-inspired representation of (18).

How, if at all, can the suggestion that that-clauses denote properties of Fregean propositions be squared with the desired logical form of (15), i.e., (15b)? The Fregean_E might claim that the similarity between (15) and (18) is to be explained by the fact that in *both* reports the that-clause picks out a proposition-type Φ . But while ‘says’ can be analyzed as a two-place relation between agent and the proposition-type supplied the that-clause, ‘believes’ cannot. After all, according to the Fregean_E, the belief-relation is fundamentally a relation between agents and Fregean propositions, **not** properties thereof. In my view, the Fregean should claim that the underlying metaphysical difference between *saying* and *believing* engenders a crucial semantic difference between attributions of meaning and belief: whereas a report such as (18) is true just in case Frances stands in the saying-relation to the proposition-type Φ , (15) is true if, and only if Frances believes some one, or more

propositions of the type Φ . ‘Believes,’ unlike ‘says,’ forces existential quantification over propositions that are of the type denoted by the that-clause.

To illustrate the general idea here, it is helpful to consider a singular term that explicitly seems to refer to a type (or kind). Suppose that while we are sitting in the dog park at Washington Square, I utter (19) while gesturing towards a particular English bulldog:

19. Pugs are more widespread than that type of dog.

What, if anything, have I referred to by my use of ‘that type of dog?’ Prima facie, I have referred to a certain *type* of dog—namely, *the English bulldog*—by way of an instance of that type. The two-place predicate ‘_ is more widespread than _’ does not express a relation between individuals, or even pluralities of individuals, for that matter. It makes no sense to suggest that, for example, **Fido is more widespread than Spike*, or **Eighteen pugs are more widespread than seventeen bulldogs*. Rather, ‘_ is more widespread than _’ expresses a relation between *kinds*, or *types*, of things; in the case of (19), a relation between pugs and English bulldogs.

Suppose that a bit later during our visit to the dog park, I utter (20) while gesturing towards the same English bulldog:

20. Mary owns that type of dog.

Taking (19) as our model, we would expect that my use of ‘that type of dog’ also refers to a certain type, or kind, of thing—namely, *the English bulldog*. Notice that in uttering (20), however, I most certainly did not claim that Mary *owns* the kind *the English bulldog*; rather, I have claimed that *there is a dog of a certain kind that Mary owns*. Assuming that both ‘Mary’ and ‘that type of dog’ are functioning as

singular terms, where could the existential quantification be coming from? Presumably, the existential quantification arises from the *interaction* of ‘owns’ and ‘that type of dog.’ Oftentimes, when a type/kind-referring singular term is in direct object position of a verb that does not itself express a relation to types/kinds, such as ‘owns,’ an existential reading is generated. Though linguists debate on how exactly the interaction of ‘owns’ and the type/kind-referring singular term gives rise to the relevant existential interpretation, no one denies that the phenomenon occurs.²² The theorist who has come this far should claim that since *believes* is itself a relation between agents and Fregean propositions (not types thereof)—a belief-report such as (15) generates existential quantification over propositions of the type specified by the that-clause. On her account, ‘that’-clauses univocally denote Fregean-proposition-types; ‘believes’ then functions a bit like ‘owns’ in (20), whereas ‘says,’ a bit more like ‘is more widespread than’ in (19).

It should (I hope) be apparent why the view just sketched ought to be attractive to the theorist who thinks that Fregean propositions are the objects of our beliefs, and other of our cognitive attitudes. It should be equally apparent, however, that the view just sketched invites many (many) worries of its own. Among other things, the Fregean must give up the standard treatment of that-clauses enshrined in the face-value theory (Section One). Hence, the Fregean_E will have to show how, if at all, her view can accommodate the data that originally motivated the face-value account of ‘that’-clauses. For example, our discussion of the asymmetry between *saying* and *believing* notwithstanding, the inferences displayed on the left hand side of (A) and (B) certainly look valid:

(A)

²² The relevant linguistics literature is vast. As a starting point, the introduction to *The Generic Book*, edited by Krifka *et al.*, is especially helpful. See Carlson (1977) and Chierchia (1998) for two classic discussions of reference to kinds/types. Also see Section Four of Ostertag (2012) for a very helpful discussion of some of the complexities of type/kind referring singular terms.

Mary believes everything John said. $(\forall x)(\text{Said}(j, x) \rightarrow \text{Believes}(m, x))$

John said that snow is white. $\text{Said}(j, p)$

Mary believes that snow is white. $\text{Believes}(m, p)$

(B)

John said everything Mary believes. $(\forall x)(\text{Believes}(m, x) \rightarrow \text{Said}(j, x))$

Mary believes that snow is white. $\text{Believes}(m, p)$

John said that snow is white. $\text{Said}(j, p)$

If the face-value account is correct, these inferences instantiate the logical forms displayed to their right, and hence are valid. Since the Fregean_E gives an asymmetric account of ‘says’ and ‘believes,’ one might reasonably wonder whether she can capture the apparent validity of such arguments. If the Fregean_E account is to be maintained, the seeming validity of these inferences must somehow be explained away in a manner compatible with the claimed asymmetry between ‘believes’ and ‘says’. I am not, at present, confident that such an error-theoretic account can be given. But given the many virtues of the Fregean_E account, I hope my pessimism on this score turns out to have been misguided.

6. Conclusion

We began with Schiffer’s observation that many of the things we say, and believe, seem to have a certain feature that is incompatible with the traditional, face-value, Fregean and Russellian accounts of propositional content. In the course of trying to explain away the relativity feature we have been led a considerable distance from both of these traditional accounts. According to the no-semantic-content theory just sketched, *believes*, *entertains*, and other of our cognitive attitudes *are* relations

between agents and fine-grained Fregean propositions. Fregean propositions *are not*, however, the contents of our assertoric speech acts—rather what we mean, and say, are *kinds* thereof.

While we have just seen how one might *coherently* hold such a view, more work must first be done to show that the view is, in fact, *plausible*. Since the theorist who has been led to this point must give up the face-value theory, she incurs the debt of explaining away the data that Schiffer, and others, have adduced in its favor. Given the difficulty of this task, we might need to reconsider our starting point. That is, *maybe* Schiffer is right and the relativity feature simply cannot be explained away. If so, this would mean that we would need a novel account of propositional content radically unlike the traditional versions of the face-value theory due to Frege and Russell. As it turns out, Schiffer indeed has such a view to offer, but I will let him tell you about that.*

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When I was still an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, I read Stephen’s 1972 book *Meaning* in a tutorial with Simon Blackburn. The subsequent two semesters, I carried around a copy of Stephen’s 1987 book *Remnants of Meaning*, reading it twice over before ever starting my PhD work at NYU. As an undergraduate, I distinctly remember wondering whether the author of these works could possibly be as formidable in person as he is in print. (I was so nervous to meet this Stephen Schiffer that I could hardly get myself to talk with him during my visit to NYU as a prospective student.) After many years of working with Stephen, I can confidently tell you that he is indeed every bit as philosophically formidable in person!

Stephen was an ideal teacher and dissertation advisor. I am exceptionally lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him. Through his seminars, his written work, and discussion, Stephen not only taught me how to think about issues in the theory of meaning and content; he set an example of how philosophy should be done. Thank you, Stephen.

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