

Against Omniscience: The Case from Essential Indexicals

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No one else—no one other than me—knows what I know in knowing that:

1. I am making a mess.

Or so the argument goes.¹ Since an omniscient being would be a being that knows all that is known, since only I know what I know in knowing (1), and since I am not omniscient, there is no omniscient being.

In what follows I want to present and ponder this and similar arguments against omniscience, each of which turns on the issue of knowledge expressed by means of indexicals: 'I,' 'here,' 'now,' and the like. Consider also the following argument, for example: No one knows at any time other than now—no one has known at any time in the past and no one will know at any time in the future—what I know in knowing that:

2. The meeting is starting now.

Or so the argument goes.² But if an immutable being must know at any one time just what that being knows at any other time, and if what is known in knowing (2) can only be known now, it appears that no immutable being of any decent duration can know what is known in knowing (2)—and thus no immutable being can also be omniscient. Similar problems would seem to arise concerning any being conceived as both *timeless* and omniscient.

In the end, and with some qualifications, I want to claim that arguments such as these really *do* show that some attributes standardly assigned to God are not compossible with omniscience, and really do cast serious doubt on the existence of an omniscient being. In the first three sections of the paper I present the positive case

from indexicals against omniscience, first in terms of 'I' and then in terms of 'now.' But the full argument requires more. In section IV I address objections raised against similar arguments in the past, including most importantly objections raised by Nelson Pike (1970) and Hector-Neri Castañeda (1967) against earlier arguments by A. N. Prior (1962) and Norman Kretzmann (1966). In section V I consider recent work by John Perry (1979), David Lewis (1979), and Roderick Chisholm (1981) which creates some important complications for the case against omniscience.

The positive argument against omniscience presented in the first three sections is I think a strong one. Buttressed and expanded by the work of the later sections, I think, it proves conclusive.

The checkered history of attacks on omniscience by means of indexicals is as follows. Prior first posed temporal indexicals as a problem for the notion of a being both timeless and omniscient in 1962 (see also, Prior, 1959, 1967a, 1967b and 1968),³ and it is basically Prior's argument that is used against the compossibility of omniscience and immutability in Kretzmann's 1966 article. Kretzmann also offers an argument against omniscience based on what might now be called knowledge *de se*, however, drawing on work by Castañeda (1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968), which was in turn first anticipated by P. T. Geach in 1957. Kretzmann's piece was subjected to a very strong reply by Castañeda (1967c), however, which has generally been taken to be decisive.⁴

The strong influence of Castañeda's earlier work (Castañeda, 1966, 1967a) is also clearly evident in recent work on indexicals by Perry (1979), Lewis (1979), and Chisholm (1981).⁵ Despite critical comments later in the paper, I rely heavily on each of these in constructing a case against omniscience in the tradition of Kretzmann and Prior.

I. Omniscience and Knowledge *De Se*

Consider a case borrowed from Perry (1979):

I follow a trail of spilled sugar around and around a tall aisle in the supermarket, in search of the shopper who is making a mess. Suddenly I realize that the trail of sugar that I have been following is spilling from a torn sack in *my* cart, and that *I* am the culprit—I am making a mess.

What it is that I come to know at that point—what I know when I come to know that

1. I am making a mess

is traditionally regarded as the *proposition* that I am making a mess.

The proposition thus known, moreover, is traditionally regarded as the same proposition as that expressed by:

3. Patrick Grim is making a mess.

There is the following difference between (1) and (3) on the traditional view. *I* can express the proposition at issue in (1) and (3) by using (1), with its indexical 'I'. Others cannot, and are forced instead to use some mode of reference such as the 'Patrick Grim' of (3). But this is not much of a difference. On the traditional view, the same proposition is expressed in each case, and what I know or express in knowing or expressing (1) is just what others know or express in knowing or expressing (3).

As Perry (1979), Lewis (1979), and Chisholm (1981) have argued, however—in large part following Castañeda (1966, 1967a)—this seems much too simple an account of objects of knowledge in general and of what is known in cases such as (1) in particular. Contrary to the traditional view, what is known or expressed in terms of (1) and (3) is *not* the same. For the 'I' of (1) is an *essential* indexical—essential to what it is I know or express in knowing or expressing (1).

The argument is as follows.⁶ When I stop myself short in the supermarket, gather up my broken sack, and start to tidy up, this may be quite fully explained by saying that I realize (or come to believe, or come to know) that I am making a mess—what I express by (1). But it cannot be fully explained, or at least as fully explained, by saying that I realize that Patrick Grim is making a mess—what is expressed by (3). In order to give a realization on my part that Patrick Grim is making a mess the full explanatory force of my realization that *I* am making a mess, in fact, we would have to add that I know that *I* am Patrick Grim. And that, of course, is to reintroduce the indexical.

At this point we might also bring in an argument adapted from Prior.⁷ The most that can be said impersonally of me and my mess, in a certain sense, is that Patrick Grim is making a mess—what is expressed by (3). But what I realize when I realize that *I* am making a mess can't be merely this impersonal matter of a named individual making a mess, because that is not what I am suddenly *ashamed* of or what I suddenly *feel guilty* about in being ashamed or feeling guilty that I am making a mess. Others might be embarrassed by the fact that Patrick Grim is making a mess—Grim's friends and relatives might quite often be embarrassed by his antics. But only I can feel the shame and mortification of knowing that those antics are *mine*.

What is known or expressed in terms of (1), then—that I am making a mess—is not merely what is known or expressed without the indexical in terms of (3).⁸

Let us apply all this to the issue of omniscience.

In order to qualify as omniscient or all-knowing, a being must know at least all that is known. Such a being must, then, know what I know in knowing (1):

1. I am making a mess.

But what I know in such a case, it appears, is known by no omniscient being. The indexical 'I', as argued above, is *essential* to what I know in knowing (1). But only I can use that 'I' to index me—no being distinct from me can do so. I am not omniscient. But there is something that I know that no being distinct from me can know. Neither I nor any being distinct from me, then, is omniscient: there is no omniscient being.

A being distinct from me *could*, of course, know (3):

3. Patrick Grim is making a mess.

But as argued above this does not amount to what I know in knowing (1).

Would an appeal to belief *de re* be of any help to omniscience here? No.⁹ For what I know, or come to know, in knowing (1),

1. I am making a mess,

is not what I or others know in knowing, say, (4) *de re* of me:

4. *He* is making a mess.

For consider a case in which I see myself and my messy trail of sugar in a fish-eye mirror at the end of the aisle. I might then come to believe (4) *de re* of the man in the mirror—of myself, as it happens—just as anyone else might come to believe (4) *de re* of me. But I would not thereby know what I know in knowing (1), for I still might not realize that it is *me* in the mirror. A knowledge *de re* of me and my mess, then, still falls short of what I know in knowing (1) *de se*.¹⁰

Essential indexicals of this type seem to pose quite serious difficulties for any doctrine of omniscience or of an omniscient God. In any world such as ours, it seems, inhabited by a plurality of distinct self-conscious beings, there can be no omniscient or all-knowing being. For surely each distinct self-conscious being will have *something* that it knows *de se* and which thus cannot be known by others.

In later sections I want to strengthen the case against omniscience by also defending the arguments above against important objections. But let me first offer a similar argument regarding time.

II. Knowledge and 'Now'

Consider a case patterned on that of the preceding section, but in which it is 'now' rather than 'I' that is the crucial indexical: Just a moment ago, let us suppose, I was working placidly at my desk, happily scribbling away. 'Plenty of time to work a bit yet,' I was thinking to myself, 'the meeting won't be starting for quite a while.' At this point I calmly stop to listen for those reassuring meeting-hasn't-started-yet noises of my colleagues busting about in their offices. But what I hear instead is a tomb-like and ominous silence, and now the faint sound, so very far off, of laughing voices and of chairs being rearranged. With sudden panic I realize that the meeting is starting *now*.

What it is that I have realized or come to know—that

2. The meeting is starting now

—is traditionally regarded as the *proposition* that the meeting is starting now. The proposition thus known, moreover, is traditionally regarded as the same proposition as that expressed at the time of the meeting by

5. The meeting is starting at noon,

assuming that it is noon at which the events of the story take place. On the traditional view, moreover, the proposition at issue might be expressed at any time or timelessly by means of (5) with a tenseless interpretation of 'is starting.' It might have been expressed earlier by means of (6),

6. The meeting will be starting at noon,

or later by means of (7):

7. The meeting was starting at noon.

Clearly 'now' functions with respect to times, on the traditional view, much as 'I' functions with respect to people. Given this similarity, it should not be too surprising that a traditional treatment of 'now' also raises many of the same difficulties.

As I jump from my chair and scurry panic-stricken down the hall, my behavior can be quite fully explained by saying that I realize that the meeting is starting now—what is expressed by (2).

But it cannot adequately be explained by saying that I know in some timeless sense that the meeting starts at noon—what is expressed by (5) on a timeless interpretation. Nor can it adequately be explained by saying that I know what is supposedly expressed at different times by (6) and (7)—that the meeting was-or-will-be starting at noon. I may well know throughout the day, after all, that we meet at noon; 'meeting at noon' may be written boldly in my date book and etched deep into my brain. But no such timeless or tenseless knowledge will suffice to explain why I am scurrying to the conference room *now*. In order satisfactorily to explain *that* we need to point out that I realize that the meeting is starting *now*—what is expressed by (2). At the very least we need to indicate that I know that it is *now* noon, once again introducing the indexical.

Prior argues that 'what we know when we know that the 1960 final exams are over can't be just a timeless relation between dates because this isn't what we're *pleased* about when we're pleased that the exams are over' (Prior, 1962, p.116). Here we might argue along similar lines that what I know in knowing that the meeting is starting now cannot be merely some timeless or timeless relation between the meeting and noon, because that is not what I am worried or upset about as I scurry towards the conference room. What worries and upsets me is that the meeting is starting *now*. 'Now,' it appears, is an *essential* indexical: essential to what is known in knowing (2)—that the meeting is starting *now*—just as 'I' is essential to what is known in knowing (1)—that I am making a mess.

In the case of 'I' and knowledge *de se* it appears that what is known in knowing (1) *de se* is something that cannot be known by another person. In the case of 'now' and what we might term knowledge *de presenti* it appears that what is known in knowing (2) *de presenti* is something that cannot be known at another time. The indexical 'now,' as argued above, is essential to what is known in such a case. But only *now* can we use 'now' to index the appropriate time. What is expressed by (6) or (7), of course, or by a timeless reading of (5), *can* be known or expressed at another time. But as argued above, none of these amounts to what is known or expressed in knowing or expressing (2)—that the meeting is starting *now*.

What of belief or knowledge *de re*, however? Might it not be that what we have termed belief and knowledge *de presenti* are simply forms of belief *de re* in which the *rem* at issue are *times*?

What is known at one time in knowing (2), on this proposal, might be expressed later not by (7),

7. The meeting was starting at noon,
but by (8) *de re* of a time:

8. The meeting was starting then.

In the story with which we began, on this account, what I realized when I suddenly leapt from my desk and started for the conference room was that the meeting was starting *then*.

I want to argue that this does *not* capture what is known or expressed in knowing or expressing (2), and that belief or knowledge *de presenti* is no more merely belief or knowledge *de re* with respect to a time than belief *de se* is merely belief *de re* with respect to a person. It must be admitted, however, that this is not easy to show. A distinction between belief *de se* and belief *de re* regarding oneself is hard enough to show, since we are almost always well aware of who, *de re*, is us—hence the resort to fish-eye mirrors in the example of the preceding section. The distinction between belief *de presenti* and belief *de re* regarding a particular time is even more difficult to establish, because we so invariably know whether a particular time is *now*. I beg the reader's patience, then, in presenting a necessarily complex and peculiar example.

Consider a video camera which runs all day every day in the conference room, recording the passing scene on tape. And consider Professor Q, a colleague of mine, who has a time machine—or at least a time machine of sorts. What Professor Q has is a device that delivers each day's complete conference room video tape, like a morning newspaper, at the *beginning* of the day.

Here objection might be raised, I think quite rightly, against an appeal to anything so logically suspect as a time machine. I will address that objection in a moment, but for now I ask that you temporarily suspend disbelief.

At 11:55, to return to our story, Professor Q puts today's tape on his video machine. With his thumb on fast forward he skips quickly past the boring morning activities, but slows down the tape when he sees people gathering and arranging their chairs. The clock shown in the background says twelve o'clock. 'Ah,' says Professor Q, settling back to watch the fun, 'the meeting is starting,' or perhaps 'Ah, here the meeting is starting.'

Professor Q has come to believe, *de re* of that time shown or indicated on his screen, that the meeting is starting *then*. But what Professor Q does not know is that the tape he is watching is at

this point running simultaneously, as it happens, with the events that it records. So although Q knows *de re* of the time shown on his screen that the meeting is starting *then*, he does not know (*de presenti*) that the meeting is starting *now*.

If this example goes through, it does clearly seem to show that belief or knowledge *de re* with respect to times does not amount to belief or knowledge *de presenti*—what is known in knowing (2), for example. But the example may fail to carry conviction because it relies so centrally on something so logically suspect and conceptually dubious as a time machine. This is at least something of an embarrassment. Can we do without it?

Yes. In the case above, Professor Q actually owns a time machine. But since it is for the most part only Q's beliefs that are at issue, we can construct an example equally satisfactory for our purposes by supposing only that Q believes that he owns a time machine.

Let us suppose that we, the rest of the faculty, have perpetrated an elaborate hoax on poor Q. At some appropriate ceremony we presented him with a video machine and fed him a pack of atrocious lies about how each morning a tape of that day's events would be delivered to his office. Q believes every word of it, and we maintain this deceitful charade by delivering to Q's office each morning a tape of the *previous* day's activities. One day is much like another in this department, and Q never catches on.

Each day that Q thinks that he is watching that day's events on his time machine, then, he is actually watching the previous day's events on an ordinary video machine. Except today. For some reason we neglected to record yesterday's activities, so today Q's machine is being fed instead a tape of today's events as they happen.

At 11:55, Q turns on the set and begins to review the day's events. Q thinks, of course, as always, that it is today's events that he is watching—and today, unlike other days, he's right. He runs quickly past the boring morning events, already recorded, then slows down the machine when he sees a quorum gathering and arranging their chairs. At this point, unbeknownst to Q of course, we have run out of pre-recorded tape and his set is operating live from the conference room.¹¹ As far as Q knows, however, he is simply watching today's meeting as he watches every day's meeting, shown after or before it occurs as the case may be. 'Ah, says Q as he settles back to watch the fun, 'here the meeting is starting.'

Q believes, and perhaps even knows, *de re* of the time shown

on the screen—of *that* time—that the meeting is starting *then*. What he doesn't know is what we know in knowing (2) *de presenti*—that the meeting is starting *now*. And this time around we have rewritten the strange case of Professor Q without recourse to any device as logically questionable as a time machine.

Belief *de presenti* no more amounts to merely belief *de re* regarding a particular time, then, than belief *de se* amounts to merely belief *de re* regarding a particular person.

The consequences of belief *de se* for omniscience were considered in the preceding section. Does belief *de presenti* have similar consequences?

III. Omniscience and Knowledge *De Presenti*

There are things known at particular times, it seems, such as what I know in knowing that

2. The meeting is starting now,

which cannot be known at other times.

Does this pose a threat to doctrines of omniscience? Not as *direct* a threat, I think, as that posed by knowledge *de se*. But it does call for some care in specifying what omniscience is to be, and does raise serious difficulties regarding the compatibility of omniscience with other traditional attributes of God.

Consider first the issue of specification. To be omniscient or all-knowing, of course, is to know all that is or could be known. But this is still a bit unclear. Must an omniscient being know, at every moment of omniscience, all that is or could be known at any moment whatever?

If omniscience is so specified, there is and can be no omniscient being. For as argued above, there are different things that can be known only at different times. There is thus no time at which all such things might be known, and thus no time at which any being could satisfy the requirements, so stipulated, of omniscience.

If omniscience is to be possible at all, then, we will have to specify it along something like the following lines:

Df. 1. *x* is omniscient at *t* = *q* *x* knows at *t* all that is and all that can be known at *t*.¹²

This is not, perhaps, the standard image of omniscience, in which an omniscient being possesses a single timeless volume of all truths. The argument of the preceding section, however, is precisely that all truths are *not* timeless truths, and thus omniscience, if possible

at all, must instead be a dynamic characteristic involving a knowledge of different truths at different times.

So understood, at least, omniscience is not directly threatened by knowledge *de presenti*. Nor does there seem to be any particular difficulty raised by the notion of a being both omniscient in this sense and eternal. Knowledge *de presenti* appears to pose a more serious threat, however, with regard to the compatibility of omniscience with two other attributes commonly ascribed to God: timelessness and immutability.

A *timeless* being is one which at no time exists at that time to the exclusion of any other time. The God of Boethius, Anselm, and Aquinas is apparently intended to transcend time in this sense. Anselm writes:

Thou wast not, then, yesterday, nor wilt thou be to-morrow; but yesterday and to-day and to-morrow thou art; or, rather, neither yesterday nor to-day nor to-morrow thou art; but simply thou art, outside all time. (*Proslogium*, Ch. XIX; Anselm, 1968, p. 25)

Nelson Pike has pointed out that a timeless being would have neither duration—any *spread* in time—nor any temporal location: “God did not exist *before* Columbus discovered America nor will He exist *after* the turn of the century” (Pike, 1970, p. 7).

Anthony Kenny, following Suarez, has argued that such a notion of timelessness is simply incoherent (Kenny, 1969, p. 264, and 1979, p. 38 ff.). But even if this is not so, and there *could* be a timeless being, it appears that no being could be *both* timeless and omniscient.

A timeless being, as Pike emphasizes, has no temporal location. But it appears that there are things which can be known only at a particular temporal location—what I know in knowing that the meeting is starting *now*, for example. If this cannot be known by a being at any other time—at any other temporal location—then it surely cannot be known by any being which has no temporal location at all. No timeless being can know what I know in knowing such timely truths, and thus no timeless being can qualify as omniscient. As Prior puts the point regarding a God conceived as timeless:

... God could not, on the view I am considering, know that the 1960 final examinations at Manchester are over. For it isn't something that he or anyone else could know timelessly, because it just isn't true timelessly. (Prior, 1962, p. 116)

The traditional attribute of immutability may raise similar difficulties. Could any being be both omniscient and *immutable*?¹³

If immutability requires that everything true of a being at any one time also be true of that being at any other time, knowledge *de presenti* would indeed seem to pose a serious difficulty here. For if there are different things that can be known only at different times, a being lastingly omniscient in the sense of Df. 1 must know different things at different times. That He knows what I know in knowing (2), then—that the meeting is starting now—will be true of Him, as of me, at one time and not another. An omniscient being of this sort, then, cannot also be immutable.

Immutability in *this* sense, however, may be too much to ask of any being. Intuitively, I think, we would want to distinguish real from merely apparent or Cambridge changes, and would want to require of an immutable being only that he undergo no *real* change.¹⁴ Might a being be both immutable in *this* sense and omniscient?

That clearly depends on where we choose to draw the line between real and apparent change. This much, however, might still be said against the compossibility of omniscience and immutability: a being omniscient in the sense at issue does believe different things at different times, and so adopts new beliefs and abandons old ones as time passes. This has at least some claim to being a *real* change, and if it is a real change no omniscient being of the sort at issue could also be immutable in even this revised sense.

We might adopt a still weaker sense of immutability, however, which clearly *would* be compatible with omniscience. Nothing said above indicates that a being who holds different beliefs at different times must be said to *change his mind* over time, and nothing indicates that such a being will be changeable in character, inconstant in general purpose, or in any way fickle. Were we to limit the requirements of immutability to *this* type of constancy and reliability, knowledge *de presenti* would seem to pose no particular difficulty in the supposition of a being both omniscient and immutable.

The theological difficulties posed by 'now' and knowledge *de presenti*, although important, are not nearly so direct as those posed by 'I' and knowledge *de se*. Neither omniscience alone, at least if carefully stipulated relative to times, nor omniscience and eternity together, seem threatened. Omniscience and immutability, however, may be consistent only on a fairly weak construal of 'immutability,' and it does not appear that the standard attributes of omniscience and timelessness are compatible at all.

Here I have considered only 'I' and 'now,' knowledge *de se*

and *de presenti*. Other indexicals may pose other theological problems. What is known in knowing (*de hoc loco*) that the test site is *here*, for example, would seem to raise similar issues regarding omniscience and ubiquity or regarding omniscience and transcendence of space. Nor should it be assumed, I think, that the role of indexicals has been exhausted once 'I,' 'now,' and 'here' have been considered.¹⁵

IV. Some Objections: Pike and Castañeda

In the preceding sections I have attempted to present the positive case from indexicals against omniscience—an argument in the tradition of Prior and Kretzmann. Prior and Kretzmann's work has not gone uncriticized, however, and so in defense of my arguments above some reply to their critics is called for. Noteworthy among the critics are Nelson Pike and Hector-Neri Castañeda.

In *God and Timelessness* (Pike, 1970), Pike maintains that all that is shown by arguments such as those in the preceding section is not that there is any range of facts that a timeless being could not know, but only that there are "certain forms of words that a timeless individual could not use in formulating or reporting his knowledge" (p. 95):

[The timeless individual] says: 'At 3.47 p.m. on the sixth of September—the moment at which Pike said "the first scene is now on the screen"—the first scene was on the screen.' Would the timeless individual have reported the same fact as I reported when [at 3.47 on the sixth of September] I said: 'The first scene is now on the screen'? . . . I can find no reason for thinking that I and the timeless individual have not reported the same fact. (p. 92)

This is not much of an argument, however. There is, moreover, ample reason—or the same sort offered with regard to other examples above—for thinking that whatever a timeless being might know in such a case, it would *not* be what I know in knowing that the first scene is now on the screen. The impatience with which I quickly grab my popcorn and the haste with which I scamper in to find a seat, for example, are quite fully explained by saying that I realize that the first scene is now on the screen. But these are *not* explained, or at least not as fully explained, by saying that I realize that the first scene was-is-or-will-be on the screen at 3:47 p.m. on the sixth of September—what is known by a timeless being. Nor are these as fully explained by saying that I realize that the first scene did-does-or-will appear at the moment that Grim says 'the first scene is now on the screen'—not without adding,

at least, that I realize that I am *now* saying that, and that I am Grim, thereby reintroducing the indexical with a vengeance.

Pike does offer one further consideration in behalf of the identity of what is known now and what is known timelessly in such a case:

If called upon later to justify my original comment, I would point to the fact that at 3.47 p.m. on the sixth of September—the moment at which I said: 'The first scene is now on the screen'—the first scene was on the screen. This is precisely what the timeless being would point to if challenged to justify his report. (pp. 92-93)

This will not do, however. For consider the case in which the claims at issue are to be justified *at 3:47*. At that time, even if I establish all that a timeless being could ever establish—that at 3:47 p.m. on the sixth of September, etc.—I will still not have established that the first scene is *now* on the screen. In order to establish *that* I would in addition have to establish some claim in which the indexical reappears—that it is *now* 3:47 p.m., for example, or that Grim is *now* saying 'The first scene is now on the screen.'

Pike is right, I think, to consider patterns of justification here. But the *differences* in justification noted above support the claims of the preceding sections—that what is known in terms of 'now' is *not* something that might be known timelessly—rather than Pike's claims to the contrary.

In an intricate reply (Castañeda, 1967c) to Kretzmann (1966), Castañeda notes that arguments such as those in the preceding sections rely on the claim that a person cannot "believe, know, consider, or in general, apprehend and formulate for himself and by himself a proposition that contains an indexical reference by another person" (p. 204).¹⁶ Castañeda challenges this claim directly:

. . . it seems to me that there is a perfectly accessible way of, so to speak, capturing another person's indexical statements *qua* indexical. This way consists of what I have elsewhere called "quasi-indicators." (p. 204)

In order to capture the indexical 'now' at other times, however, the quasi-indicator that Castañeda offers is 'then.' What this *suggests* is that what is known or expressed in knowing or saying that the meeting is starting now might later be known or expressed in knowing or saying that the meeting was starting *then*. Both Swinburne (1977) and Kenny (1979) have taken this to be Castañeda's view.¹⁷

As argued above using Professor Q and the video machine, however, what is known in knowing *de re* of a time that the meeting was starting *then* does *not* amount to what is known in knowing *de presenti* that the meeting is starting *now*. If this were Castañeda's position, then, his view would seem to be fairly easily disposed of.

But this is not in fact Castañeda's position. What he actually holds can perhaps most clearly be indicated in two steps: First, Castañeda holds that the *fact* that someone knows something that they might express using an indexical is a *fact* that can be expressed by others or at another time using a quasi-indicator in *oratio obliqua*. That someone *X* knows at *t₁* what they might express by 'The meeting is starting now,' for example, is a fact that can later be expressed by 'At *t₁*, *X* knew that the meeting was starting then.' This is clearly quite different from the claim above that *what* is expressed at one time using an indexical can *itself* be expressed at another time using a quasi-indicator in *oratio recta*.¹⁸

Second, Castañeda proposes a principle (P):

(P) If a sentence of the forms '*X* knows that a person *Y* knows that . . . ' formulates a true statement, then the person *X* knows the statement formulated by the clause filling the blank ' . . . ' (Castañeda, 1967c, p. 207)

Together, these two steps clearly do entail that one can know what is known in terms of indexicals by others or at other times. If *X* knows now—at *t₁*—that the meeting is starting now, then by the first step *Y* can know at some later time that at *t₁*, *X* knew that the meeting was starting *then*. By principle (P), *Y* thereby knows what *X* then knew.¹⁹

None of this, however, gives us any *expression* of what it is that *Y* knows in (supposedly) knowing what *X* then knew, other than perhaps as 'what *X* knew . . . ' or 'what *X* expressed by . . . ' It does not, in particular, allow us to say that what *Y* knows is that 'The meeting was starting then,' for Castañeda is quite careful to emphasize that (P) does not license detachment of this type.²⁰

Castañeda in fact never even *attempts* to enunciate precisely *what* it is that one knows in (supposedly) knowing what is known by others or at other times in terms of indexicals. This might seem to leave him open to the following argument: What *could* be known by others that would count as what I know in knowing I am making a mess, and what *could* be known at some other time that would count as what is *now* known in knowing that the meeting is starting *now*? Knowing that 'Patrick Grim is making a mess,' or that 'The

meeting starts at noon' clearly will *not* suffice, for reasons given in preceding sections. Nor will knowledge *de re* suffice, no matter how intimate. But if what supposedly can be known by others or at other times is *not* one of these, what could it possibly *be*? If Castañeda can supply no further candidate for what it is that is supposedly known in such cases, it might be argued, we may have at least some grounds for doubting that there *is* anything so known.

What this argument demands, however, is that Castañeda offer an expression in *oratio recta* of what is known by others or at other times in terms of indexicals. But this might simply be shrugged off as a further misunderstanding, for Castañeda nowhere claims that what is so known *can* be known or expressed in *oratio recta*.²¹ Castañeda does maintain that one can know or express what is known or expressed by others or at other times in terms of indexicals, but maintains only that what is so known can be known or expressed using quasi-indicators in *oratio obliqua*. The proposition that I know or express by 'I am making a mess,' on Castañeda's view, is also known or expressed *in situ* in terms of the subordinate clause 'he (himself) is making a mess' in 'Patrick Grim knows that he (himself) is making a mess.'²² What a person *K* knows or expresses by 'The meeting is starting now,' by the same token, can later be known or expressed *in situ* in terms of the subordinate clause 'the meeting was starting then' of 'At *t₁*, *K* knew that the meeting was starting then.' It might also be expressed *tenselessly*, on Castañeda's view, by the subordinate clause 'the meeting is (tenselessly) starting then' of 'At *t₁*, *K* knows (tenselessly) that the meeting is (tenselessly) starting then.'²³

When finally disentangled from various misinterpretations, however, it is clear that Castañeda's position is open to a quite crucial objection.

Consider first a case in which an individual McQ knows, on quite general grounds, that :

9. The shortest spy knows that he (himself) is a spy.

Genuine spying, after all, would require at least some measure of premeditation. Suppose also, however, that *I* am a spy, and—unbeknownst even to me, perhaps—I am the shortest in my profession.

On Castañeda's view, it appears that McQ would know in virtue of knowing (9) what I know in virtue of knowing (10):

10. I am a spy.

For what I know in knowing that I am a spy, Castañeda maintains,

is captured *in situ* by the subordinate clause 'he (himself) is a spy' of (9). By principle (P), McQ knows what is expressed in that clause in virtue of knowing (9).

But this is at least strongly counter-intuitive. For McQ may well know that

9. The shortest spy knows that he (himself) is a spy,

and yet not know what I know. What I know, after all, is that I am a spy. McQ, although fully cognizant of (9), may not know that—he may not know that I am a spy—just as he may not know that I am the shortest spy. McQ, then, although he knows (9), does not know what I know in knowing (10). I am safe in my deception.

As Robert Merrihew Adams notes with respect to two related examples by Adams and Rogers Albritton:

... it is clear that the problem arises because the person who knows the complex proposition ascribing an *oratio obliqua* fails in some way or respect to know who the person is to whom the *oratio obliqua* is ascribed—although of course he does know something that he could give as an answer to the question to whom he is ascribing the *oratio obliqua*. . . . The person to whom it is ascribed could not fail to grasp it in the same way, however. (Adams & Castañeda, 1983, p. 294)²⁴

A similar example might be constructed using names. Consider a case in which intentional mess-making is a capital crime and in which officer McQ on the basis of a single teletyped message from the FBI, knows that:

11. Patrick Grim knows that he (himself) is making a mess.

Unbeknownst to McQ, however, I am perpetrating my nefarious deeds using an alias and a disguise, posing as a tidy and law-abiding fellow officer.

On Castañeda's view, McQ in knowing (11) would know what I know in knowing (1):

1. I am making a mess.

For what I know in knowing that I am making a mess, Castañeda maintains, is captured *in situ* by the subordinate clause 'he (himself) is making a mess' of (11), and by principle (P) McQ knows what is expressed in that clause in virtue of knowing (11).

But this is surely incorrect. McQ may well know that

11. Patrick Grim knows that he (himself) is making a mess,

and yet not know what I know what I know, after all, is that I

am making a mess. McQ, although fully cognizant of (11), may not know that—he may not know that I am making a mess—simply because he may not know that I am Patrick Grim. My ruse is a success.

In knowing (11) McQ does *not* necessarily know what I know in knowing that I am making a mess. At least one part of Castañeda's two-part position, then, must be incorrect. Either what I know or express by 'I am making a mess' is *not* captured by the relevant subordinate clause, or someone does *not* know what I know solely in virtue of knowing that I know it.

Such a case is also possible concerning time. It is 10:00, let us suppose, and I know that:

2. The meeting is starting now.

McQ on the other hand, knows that:

12. At 10:00 Patrick Grim knows (tenselessly) that the meeting is (tenselessly) starting then.

On the view at issue, what I know in knowing (2) is also something that McQ would know in virtue of knowing (12). For what I know, Castañeda maintains, is captured *in situ* by the subordinate clause 'the meeting is (tenselessly) starting then' of (12), and McQ knows what is expressed in that clause in virtue of knowing (12).

But this is again clearly incorrect. For McQ may well know that

12. At 10:00 Patrick Grim knows (tenselessly) that the meeting is (tenselessly) starting then,

and yet not know what I know. What I know, after all, is that the meeting is starting now. McQ, although fully cognizant of (12), may not know that—he may not know that the meeting is starting now—simply because McQ may not know that it is now 10:00.²⁵ Someone who knows (12), then, does not necessarily know what I know in knowing (2)—that the meeting is starting now. At least part of Castañeda's position must be incorrect: either what I know or express by 'The meeting is starting now' is *not* captured by the relevant subordinate clause, or someone does *not* know what I know solely in virtue of knowing that I know it.

Castañeda's position will not do, then, despite its sophistication, as a reply to the arguments presented in the preceding sections. It falls victim, in fact, to the same general difficulty encountered above with regard to other attempts to capture ephemeral or nontransferable indexical knowledge by means of some

permanent or transferrable non-indexical equivalent: knowledge of the supposed equivalent amounts to what is known in terms of indexicals only on the assumption of some further indexical knowledge.

Knowledge *de se* and *de presenti*, then, still pose a crucial difficulty for doctrines of omniscience.

V. Some Complications: Perry, Lewis, and Chisholm

As noted in the introduction and at various points throughout, I have borrowed freely in preceding sections from arguments offered by John Perry, David Lewis, and Roderick Chisholm. What has not been noted above is that each of these authors also presents a positive account of knowledge and its objects which creates complications for the case against omniscience.

It is these complications that I want to consider here. In one case—that of Perry—I will argue directly against the account proposed. With regard to Lewis and Chisholm, on the other hand, I want merely to show that the accounts proposed offer little consolation for standard doctrines of omniscience.

Perry's is a two-pronged account which relies on a crucial distinction between *objects* of belief and *belief states*.²⁶ *What* I know in knowing that I am making a mess, Perry proposes—the *object* of my belief—is what is known by others in knowing *de re* of me that I am making a mess. Knowledge *de re* and *de se* do not differ in their objects, and thus "anyone can at any time have access to any proposition" (Perry, 1979, p. 19).

Knowledge *de re* and *de se* do differ, however, as Perry's examples of split sugar in the supermarket and of mirrors at the ends of aisles clearly indicate. But this difference, Perry maintains, is a difference of belief *state* rather than of what is believed. In believing *de se* that I am making a mess I believe *what* others believe in believing *de re* that I am making a mess. But I am not in their belief *state*—I am instead in the belief state of all those who believe *themselves* to be making a mess, whoever they might be.

Neither what I believe, on such a view, nor my belief state, is unique to me. What is unique to me is their combination:

Anyone can believe of John Perry that he is making a mess. And anyone can be in the belief state classified by the sentence 'I am making a mess.' But only I can have that belief by being in that state. (Perry, 1979, p. 19)

Perry's position, if adequate, *would* offer a way in which doctrines of omniscience might escape the difficulties noted above. For

nothing has been said to indicate that some other being might not know *de re* of me that I am making a mess, and nothing has been said to indicate that a being at some other time, or a timeless being, could not know *de re* of a time that the meeting is starting *then*. If what is known in terms of indexicals—that I am making a mess, or that the meeting is starting *now*—*were* in this way captured by knowledge *de re*, then, indexicals would pose no particular problem for omniscience. On this view, of course, no other being could know what I know in knowing that I am making a mess, and no timeless being could know what I know in knowing that the meeting is starting now, *by* being in the same belief state. Other beings or timeless beings *could* know *what* I know, however, and that would seem to be all that omniscience demands.

Perry's account is not in the end a very plausible account, however, and must I think be rejected in light of precisely the type of case that Perry presents. For consider again an example in which I see, in a fish-eye mirror at the end of the aisle, a man with a broken sack in his shopping cart and a trail of sugar behind him.

At this point in the story I know, *de re* of the man in the mirror, that:

4. *He* is making a mess.

But there is also quite clearly something that I *haven't* yet realized and that I *don't* yet know: that it is *me* in the mirror, and that I am making a mess. That I am the culprit is something that I realize only a moment later and with a sudden shock of guilty recognition.

Were Perry's account correct, however, this would not be the case. For on Perry's account, once I know (4) *de re* of the man I see in the mirror—of myself, as it happens—I know all I ever know. On this account there is nothing more that is known in knowing *de se* that I am making a mess, and thus there is nothing more that I suddenly realize or recognize or come to know in discovering that I am the culprit. Perry does maintain that my belief *state* will change, but that is quite sharply distinguished from my beliefs; there will be nothing I come to believe that I did not believe before, and nothing I come to know that I did not already know.

Because this is so drastically counter-intuitive, I think, both Perry's account and any hope it might have seemed to offer for doctrines of omniscience must be abandoned. Here we might borrow again an argument from Prior. What I know in knowing *de se* that I am making a mess cannot be merely what I know in

knowing *de re* that *he* is making a mess, because that is not what I am *ashamed* of, or what I feel *guilty* about, in being ashamed or feeling guilty that I am making a mess. Nor, of course, am I suddenly ashamed of being in a particular belief state. What I am ashamed of is what I suddenly realize, above and beyond the fact that *he* is making a mess—that it is *me* in the mirror, and that I am making a mess.

A quite different type of account has been proposed by David Lewis and Roderick Chisholm in considering indexicals. Each proposes an account of belief as the self-ascription of *properties*. For Lewis,

I say that *all* belief is 'self-locating belief.' Belief *de dicto* is self-locating belief with respect to logical space; belief irreducibly *de se* is self-locating belief at least partly with respect to ordinary time and space, or with respect to the population. I propose that any kind of self-locating belief should be understood as self-ascription of properties. (Lewis, 1979, p. 523)

For Chisholm,

Believing must be construed as a relation between a believer and *some* other thing; this much is essential to *any* theory of belief. What kind of thing, then? . . . The simplest conception, I suggest, is one which construes believing as a relation involving a believer and a property—a property which he may be said to attribute to himself. (Chisholm, 1981, p. 27)

Here, for the sake of simplicity, I will concentrate on Lewis's account. Differences in Chisholm will be noted in due course.

What I self-attribute in knowing or believing *de se* that I am making a mess, on such an account, is of course the property of making a mess. What I self-attribute in knowing that

3. Patrick Grim is making a mess,

on the other hand, is something quite different: the property of being in a world in which Patrick Grim is making a mess.²⁷ This distinction clearly allows a property account to avoid some of the major pitfalls of a traditional propositional account, in which what is known is in each case the same.

A property account also suggests, however, that what is known in terms of indexicals—that I am making a mess, or that the meeting is starting now—is something that can be known by others or at other times. For if belief and knowledge are matters of the self-tribution of properties, and if others can attribute to themselves the same properties that I attribute to myself, it would appear

that they can then know or believe what I know or believe. What I know in knowing that I am making a mess, on such a view, would be what others know in knowing themselves to be making a mess.²⁸

Lewis accepts this quite stalwartly as a consequence of his account. Lewis notes with regard to the mad Heimson, who believes himself to be Hume:

There are two ways out. (1) Heimson does not, after all, believe what Hume did. Or (2) Heimson does believe what Hume did, but Heimson believes falsely what Hume believed truly. . . .

If we can agree that beliefs are in the head, so that Heimson and Hume may indeed believe alike, then the first way out is shut. We must take the second. Heimson's belief and Hume's have the same object, but Heimson is wrong and Hume is right . . . the object of their shared belief . . . is a property: the property of being Hume. Hume self-ascribes this property; he has it; he is right. Heimson, believing just what Hume does, self-ascribes the very same property; he lacks it; he is wrong. (Lewis, 1979, pp. 525-526)²⁹

What are the consequences of such a view for the possibility of omniscience? At first glance, it might seem to offer an escape for omniscience from indexical difficulties, since on such a view what is known in terms of indexicals *can* be known by others or at other times. Any such sanguine hopes will be disappointed, however. On an account such as Lewis', at least, omniscience is in *worse* shape than before.

One of the things I know now, let us say, is that I am making a mess. Another is that:

13. I have made some terrible mistakes in my time.

On Lewis' account, what I know in each case *can* be known by some other being. But can it be known by *God*? Certainly not, at least if God's other attributes are what they are traditionally reputed to be. In order for God to know what I know, on Lewis' account, he must self-attribute truly the properties of making a mess and of having made some terrible mistakes. But God *cannot* self-attribute such properties truly, for God makes neither messes nor mistakes. God does not, then, know what I know. God is not omniscient.

Here we need not appeal to other divine attributes, however. For consider a case in which I know that I am making a mess, but in which Mck, sweeping up spilt sugar in the supermarket, knows what he would express by 'I am *not* now making a mess.'

A being which knows all that is known, on a view such as Lewis's, would have to self-attribute truly all that is self-attributed truly. But clearly no being could self-attribute truly both what I and MCK self-attribute. Given two beings of two minds, in such a sense, no being is omniscient.

Finally, and perhaps most simply, consider what I know in knowing that:

14. I am not omniscient.

Clearly what I self-attribute in knowing (14) could not be self-attributed truly by any omniscient being. Given any being self-conscious of its own *lack* of omniscience, on a view such as Lewis', no being is omniscient.

Lewis' account, then, offers little or no room for doctrines of omniscience. Chisholm's account, although in many respects the same as Lewis', also differs in some important ways. But it does not differ in any ways that would seem to offer significant hope for traditional notions of omniscience.

Chisholm and Lewis agree on at least the following points. For each, belief is to be treated in terms of the self-attribution of properties (Lewis, 1979, pp. 514 and 522; Chisholm, 1981, p. 27). Belief *de re* and *de dicto*, moreover, are given very similar subsidiary accounts (Lewis, 1979, pp. 538-543 and 552; Chisholm, 1981, pp. 29-30 and 38). Conditions for truth in self-attribution, and hence for knowledge, appear to be the same as well (Lewis, 1979, p. 526; Chisholm, 1981, p. 44).

There are also points of disagreement in the two accounts, however. Although each offers a property account, for example, it is not clear that Lewis and Chisholm agree as to *what* properties are at issue. For Lewis, "the property of being Hume is a perfectly possible property" (Lewis, 1979, p. 525). For Chisholm, it may not be a property at all—Chisholm finds a 'demonstrative sense' in proper names (Chisholm, 1981, p. 58), and considers it problematic whether "terms and predicates containing demonstratives . . . will have properties as their senses" (Chisholm, 1981, pp. 7-8).

There might also be a more important point of disagreement, however. Lewis, as noted above, treats the properties self-attributed as the *objects* of belief or knowledge, and so treats identity of property self-attributed as sufficient for identity of what is known or believed. Sydney Shoemaker has characterized Chisholm as well as holding that "the objects of belief are properties" (Shoemaker, 1981). But this may not be Chisholm's view:

In the case of direct attribution as well as attribution generally, we shall say that the property attributed is the *content* of the attribution and that the thing *to* which the property is attributed is the *object* of the attribution. But there is no reason to suppose that there is still *another* thing, somehow involving both the individual thing and the property of being wise, which is properly called 'the object' of direct attribution, this despite the fact that in such a case one can ask: 'And *what* is it that he believes?' For we have rejected the view that explicates attribution by reference to the acceptance of propositions. (Chisholm, 1981, p. 35)

Chisholm is not an easy man to interpret. But perhaps Chisholm is here proposing a more radical rejection of 'objects of knowledge' in a traditional sense, and of talk of '*what* is believed,' than either Lewis offers or that Shoemaker credits him with. The passage above might be interpreted as suggesting not that Chisholm replaces propositions with properties as the objects of belief or knowledge, or as *what* is known or believed, but that he rejects any notion of objects of belief in this sense, or of *what* is known or believed, altogether.

This more radical view, if it is Chisholm's, would clearly distinguish his position importantly from Lewis's. But it is not clear that it would offer any consolation for standard notions of omniscience. The traditional characterization of a being as all-knowing or omniscient seems to demand that we quantify over objects of knowledge or over what is known: to be omniscient is to know all *x*, where *x* is something known. To abandon altogether any notion of what is known or of objects of knowledge, of course, would be to abandon any traditional notion of omniscience of this sort as well.

VI. Conclusion

I have tried to present as strong a case as possible against omniscience, in terms of both positive argument from essential indexicals and critical consideration of complications and objections. With as much modest dogmatism as is justified in any such attempt, I consider the case against omniscience to be conclusive. Considerations of what is known in terms of temporal indexicals such as 'now' *do* show that no being can be both timeless and omniscient. Considerations of what is known in terms of the indexical 'I' do show that there is no omniscient being.

Does this leave *no* option for doctrines of omniscience, of *any* sort? That would of course be too strong. I see two possible options: One option would be to declare by fiat that what is known in

terms of indexicals is a special case of some sort, and to weaken the requirements of omniscience accordingly. Indexical knowledge might be declared 'nonpropositional' in some suitably defined sense, for example, and 'omniscience' re-defined so as to demand merely knowledge of all things *propositional*.

Another option would be to follow the example of those who have tried to save *omnipotence* from logical difficulties. We might propose, for example, that a being is omniscient if it knows all that it is *logically possible* for such a being to know. If stubborn difficulties in the case of omniscience are any indication, however, a satisfactory account of this sort would not be easy.³⁰

Each of these options, of course, calls for an understanding of omniscience in something other than the traditional sense of being literally all-knowing: of knowing all that is or could be known. The case against omniscience in the traditional sense, I think, is closed.³¹

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NOTES

¹This argument is not presented fully until section I. Those familiar with John Perry's 1977 piece, however, will undoubtedly guess the form it will take.

²This argument is not fully presented until sections II and III. I do not in fact argue that no immutable being can also be omniscient, however. I do argue that no timeless being can also be omniscient.

³There is, however, a medieval form of the problem in terms of tensed statements which appears in Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* Ia, 14, 15) and is discussed by Kenny 1979, p. 42. *It*.

⁴See for example Richard Swinburne's discussion of the debate in Swinburne, 1977, pp. 162-167. Kenny is an exception in this regard in that he sides with Kretzmann, at least with regard to temporal indexicals (see Kenny, 1979, pp. 39-46).

³Perry's, Lewis's, and some aspects of Chisholm's recent work might in fact be thought of as developments of Castañeda's basic work on indexicals. The central argument of Perry's 1977 piece, for example, which I in turn rely on in the present paper, is anticipated in Castañeda's 1966 piece complete with the use of mirrors (Castañeda, 1966, 141-142).

⁴This argument is stated most clearly, I think, in Perry's 1977 piece, although earlier forms of the argument appear in Perry (1977) and are discussed in Lewis (1979). The argument does not appear in Chisholm's work (1981); oddly enough, although Chisholm's case would be stronger if it did, as Sydney Shoemaker has noted in his review (Shoemaker, 1981).

⁵Prior's argument, from which this is adapted, concerns tense, and is quoted in part in the following section. See Prior, 1962, p. 116.

⁶This argument, like many philosophical arguments, takes the form of a challenge. If there is something that others may know that *is* what I know in knowing (1)—that I am making a mess—what could that something possibly be? I have argued explicitly here against what seem to be the only plausible candidates: (3), that Patrick Grim is making a mess, and (4), that *he* is making a mess, known *de re* of me.

⁷We might also consider a Russellian suggestion, however: what of that proposition in which a logically proper name for Patrick Grim replaces his indexical 'I' in 'I am making a mess'?

This takes us into the thick of Russell. What is a logically proper name? It is a name that designates directly by "simply standing for an object of acquaintance" (Russell, 1939, p. 54), and "names it by a convention *ad hoc*, not by a description" (1967, p. 30). The standard example of a logically proper name is 'this' used to designate a present sense-datum, but Russell also proposes universals (1959, pp. 51-52), the past (1967, p. 37), and perhaps the 'I' (1959, pp. 50-51) as objects of direct acquaintance capable of logically proper names.

Now might not others know what I know in knowing (1)—that I am making a mess—by knowing, say that L. P. N. is making a mess, where 'L. P. N.' is a logically proper name for me?

On Russell's account, of course, others can have no logically proper name for me because I am not for them (and perhaps am not even for myself) an object of direct acquaintance. But this would seem to be merely an epistemological barrier, and a contingent epistemological barrier at that. Let us suppose that some other being *could* know me by direct acquaintance and so could use a logically proper name for me. Wouldn't such a being then be capable of knowing what I know in knowing (1)—that I am making a mess—in virtue of knowing that L. P. N. is making a mess?

No. For what are now at issue are logically proper names which an individual need not *hear* in order to *use*, and which any number of beings might use. In order to know that L. P. N. is making a mess, then, a being need not himself be making a mess and need not know himself to be making a mess. But if that is the case, *I* might know what other beings might know—that L. P. N. is making a mess—without knowing that I am making a mess. Whatever another being knows in knowing that L. P. N. is making a mess, then—using any particular candidate for L. P. N.—it cannot be what I know in knowing (1). For given any candidate L. P. N. as a logically proper name available to others, I might know that L. P. N. is making a mess without yet knowing that *I* am.

Logically proper names, despite their interesting peculiarities, appear to fall victim to the same pattern of argument as that presented above. The same would be true, I think, for the arguments of the next section and any attempt to introduce logically proper names for times.

⁸On a view such as Frege's, *de re* belief itself causes difficulties for a propositional account. My belief *de re* that my wife is kind will surely have no adequate place in a propositional account if propositions are taken to be so like sentences—so obsessively *de dicto*—that I must be said to believe two distinct propositions in believing that the woman who loves me is kind and in believing that the woman who lives with me is kind. In order to include even *de re* belief, then, the propositions of a propositional account must be stretched to include *de re* conglomerates composed of objects together with parts of propositions in the more traditional sense. On this see John Perry (1977).

⁹In several places Castañeda has argued against taking the *de re/de dicto* distinction

as exhaustive, precisely because of quasi-indicators. This is perhaps clearest in Castañeda, 1980.

¹⁰We will be safe in our deception unless Q presses the fast forward again in order to watch what will not occur until later this afternoon. In that case we will have to fake a mechanical failure of some type.

¹¹In Swinburne's 1977 piece he offers a definition of omniscience which does include a mention of times, and which may be intended to be time-bound in this sense: "... to say of a person *P* that he is at time *t* omniscient is to say that at *t* *P* knows of every true proposition that it is true" (p. 162). It is not clear, however, whether Swinburne intends this to be read such that a person omniscient at *t* is required only to know of every proposition true at *t* that it is true. Since in the context Swinburne follows Castañeda in arguing against Kretzmann's treatment of a time and tense, this is perhaps not what is intended.

¹²My discussion of this issue here is of necessity fairly limited. See also Kenny (1979), chapter IV.

¹³See Geach, 1969, p. 71. A classic example of a Cambridge change is Socrates's coming to be shorter than Theaetetus as Theaetetus grows.

¹⁴On this see Almog, 1981 and Castañeda, 1967a. In Castañeda's 1967a piece he argues that various indexicals call for a similar treatment, and suggests five irreducible indexical roles: first-person, second-person, third-person, (spectious) present-time, and (speciously) present place.

¹⁵This and the following quotation are phrased to apply to cases involving the use of the indexical 'I' by other people. In context it is clear that the general point is also to apply to cases involving the use of 'now' at other times.

¹⁶Swinburne, quoted with approval by Kenny, offers the following as a gloss of Castañeda's argument in Castañeda, 1967c:

A knows on 2 October the proposition 'it is now 2 October'. Surely B on 3 October can know that A knew what he did on 2 October. How can B report his knowledge? By words such as 'I know that A knew yesterday that it was then 2 October'. How can we report B's knowledge? As follows: B knew on 3 October that on the previous day A knew that it was then 2 October. Hence, . . . B knows on 3 October what A knew on 2 October, although B will use different words to express the latter knowledge. In reporting B's knowledge of this item, we need a different referring expression to pick out the day of which being 2 October is predicted; but what is known is the same. . . . What A knows on 2 October and B knows on 3 October is that a certain day which can be picked out in many and various ways, according to our location in time as 'today' or 'yesterday' or 'the day on which A thought it was 2 October' (or even as '2 October') is 2 October. (Swinburne, 1973, pp. 165-166, cited in Kenny, 1979, p. 46)

This view, as noted, is adequately disposed of by arguments offered in preceding sections against a treatment of knowledge *de presenti* in terms of merely knowledge *de re* concerning a time. But as also noted this is *not* in fact Castañeda's view.

Castañeda is still more radically misinterpreted by Chisholm:

Castañeda also assumes that there are first-person propositions. He tells us that, when a person uses an 'I'-sentence, then he is expressing a first-person proposition which 'is different from every third-person proposition about him and, of course, different from any third-person proposition about anything else'. Castañeda thus seems to suggest the view that he could never express my 'I'-propositions, and I believe he would say that, strictly speaking, he could not even grasp them. (Chisholm, 1981, p. 33)

The view attributed to him in the last sentence here is explicitly denied by Castañeda in almost everything he has written on the topic. Castañeda repeatedly states that what is expressed by first-person 'I'-sentences can be expressed by others in *oratio obliqua* by means of quasi-indicators. See for example Castañeda, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1968. This position is again stated explicitly, moreover, on the page immediately preceding that from which Chisholm draws the quotation used (see Castañeda, 1975, pp. 158 and 159).

¹⁶This paragraph represents a quite basic Castañeda claim, repeatedly presented in Castañeda, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1968, 1975.

¹⁷In context it is clear, I think, that (P) is to be read flexibly both with respect to senses of 'know'—so as to apply, for example, to 'Joe will know that Jane had known that . . . and with respect to pronouns, names, or referring expressions in substitution for 's' and 'x'. I am at any rate so using it here. Without that flexibility it is not clear that (P) would serve even Castañeda's immediate purposes.

¹⁸See for example Castañeda, 1967c, pp. 207-208 and Castañeda, 1967a, p. 93.

¹⁹Quasi-indicators, in fact—the mechanisms Castañeda proposes for catching others' indexical references intact—cannot even appear in *oratio recta*. See esp. (H¹), p. 154 of Castañeda, 1966.

The argument offered in the preceding paragraph is not, I think, entirely without force. It does rely on an assumption, however, that everything known is in some way known in *oratio recta*. I do not consider that an implausible assumption, but I do not know either how one would attempt to demonstrate it.

²⁰This is put particularly straightforwardly on p. 158 of Castañeda, 1975.

²¹Castañeda proposes a very similar tenseless rendering in Castañeda, 1967c.

²²Adams's and Albritton's examples are discussed in Adams and Castañeda, 1983 and Castañeda, 1983. Castañeda now recognizes the weakness of his argument against Kretzmann, and in particular has abandoned his earlier view that the proposition expressed by Tiresias's 'I am the blind Tiresias,' for example, is also expressed as part of 'Tiresias believes that he himself is the blind Tiresias.'

²³With regard to these examples some discussion of a further principle which appears in Castañeda's work is perhaps also in order.

Castañeda has repeatedly noted that indicators even in *oratio obliqua* express indexical references by the speaker, and leave it open whether the person spoken about refers to the same objects indexically or not (see Castañeda, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1968). In Castañeda, 1968 this point appears in the form of principles (I.1) and (I.2).

(1.1) An indexical reference in *oratio obliqua* is made by the speaker and is presented by the *oratio obliqua* as being made by him and not as being made by the person to whom knowledge (belief, conjecture, assertion, etc.) is attributed; and indicator always has the largest scope in a sentence containing it.

(1.2) An indexical reference *R* in *oratio obliqua*, that is not part of an attribution of self-knowledge (self-belief, self-conjecture, etc.) leaves it by itself wholly unspecified how the person to whom knowledge (belief, etc.) is attributed refers to the person or object to whom *R* is made. (Castañeda, 1968, p. 440).

In Castañeda, 1967a the point is made in terms of an example:

Suppose now that Privatus asserts of a dead friend of his:

(2) Once it occurred to Jones that I buried a letter here. . . . One thing is clear. In spite of their misleading position in the *oratio obliqua* of (2), the indicators of (2) serve to mark the positions occupied by some unspecified referring expressions in the sentence formulating the unspecified proposition that, according to (2), Jones once took to be true. Those referring expressions that Jones used were, of course, either

- (a) single indicators; or
- (b) names; or
- (c) indexical descriptions, like 'this man,' 'my friend,' or 'five years ago today (now)'; or
- (d) Leibnizian descriptions, i.e. descriptions that contain no indicators

The actual proposition that, by (2), Jones once took to be true can be one of eight different types, depending on which sort of reference Jones made to Privatus and the place in question. And now we must raise another question: Is Privatus' statement (2) definite enough on this point? And the answer seems to be that it is

not: Privatus' statement (2) is simply the statement to the effect that one of the eight types of propositions allowed by the two positions occupied by indicators was taken by Jones to be true. That is, Privatus' statement (2) is to be conceived of as a disjunction of certain statements which we proceed to identify. (Castañeda, 1967a, pp. 89-90)

Castañeda's main point here is both clearly correct and crucially important: neither the 'I' nor the 'here' of Privatus's (2) need indicate that Jones referred *indexically* to Privatus or to the spot in question. It is on this basis that Castañeda (1967c) criticizes Kretzmann's formulation of his argument against omniscience (Kretzmann, 1966). But it is also on this basis, interestingly enough, that Castañeda suggests a limitation to God's omniscience and omnipotence: God can neither know nor formulate all propositions indexically in *oratio recta* (Castañeda, 1967c, p. 210).

Castañeda's presentation in both passages above, however, may be liable to misinterpretation. The 'I' and 'here' of Privatus's (2), we have said, need not indicate indexical reference on Jones's part, and (2) may be true although Jones referred *non-indexically* to Privatus and the place in question. But this should not be taken the other way around, as it were. It does *not* follow and it is *not* the case that just any form of reference by Jones to Privatus and the place in question will suffice to make (2) true.

Consider for example a case in which it one day occurs to Jones, quite out of the blue, that:

- (15) The shortest person to bury a letter in the second largest state buried a letter in the second largest state.

Let us also suppose—although Jones is unaware of this—that (1) Privatus buried a letter in Texas, that (2) as it happens he is the shortest person to do so, and that (3) Texas is the second largest state. If Privatus is speaking in Texas, does that make his statement true?

- (2) Once it occurred to Jones that I buried a letter here.
- (15) The shortest person to bury a letter in the second largest state buried a letter in the second largest state.

would Privatus's statement (16) necessarily hold:

- (16) Jones knows that I buried a letter here.

Why *don't* (2) and (16) hold in these circumstances, and why *doesn't* Castañeda's principle apply 'in reverse', as it were? The basic reason, I think, is a quite general one which Castañeda mentions in discussing *knowing who*:

A sentence like 'Peter knows who his neighbor is' really formulates different statements, not only because of the multiplicity of persons named 'Peter', but also because of the different criteria involved in identifying a certain person, i.e. knowing who a certain person is. The criteria vary from case to case depending on purposes and circumstances. (Castañeda, 1968, p. 446)

This is also, I think, what underlies both the examples above and those offered by Adams and Albritton (see Adams and Castañeda, 1983 and Castañeda, 1983).

²⁴See especially Perry (1979), but also Perry (1977). David Lewis characterizes Perry as holding that belief has *two* objects (see Lewis, 1979, p. 536). But this seems to me to obscure both the strengths and the weaknesses of Perry's account.

²⁵Belief *de se* is a more complicated matter on both Lewis's and Chisholm's accounts, and is not of immediate relevance here.

²⁶The relation of this account to Perry's is fairly obvious: I know what *X* knows, on Lewis's account, if and only if *X* and I are in the same belief state, on Perry's account. Lewis does concede almost parenthetically that "Doubtless it is true in some sense that Heimson does not believe what Hume did" (Lewis, 1979, p. 525). But this seems to play no role at all in his final position.

²⁷A number of classic pieces on omniscience and its difficulties appear in *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Baruch Brody (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974). More recent pieces of note in the controversy include Swinburne (1973), La Croix (1975,

1977), Mavrodes (1977), Hoffman (1979), and Reichenbach (1980). The most recent exchange is represented by Wierenga (1981) and Hoffman (1981).

¹¹I am grateful to Michael Stort, Kristie Taylor, David Pomeroy, and an anonymous referee for *Noûs* for very helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. Thanks also to Lee Miller for the use of his Latin.