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'De se vs de nunc'

How much do *de se* attitudes – attitudes whose canonical expression in English is the word 'I' – and *de nunc* attitudes – attitudes whose canonical expression in English is the word 'now', or the present tense – have in common? A lot, is the standard assumption: the *de se* and *de nunc* are taken to be two species of the same genus, the genus indexical, and the debates about the two species are taken to run in parallel. This assumption is common ground between 'essential indexical boosters' (e.g. Lewis, Perry, Castañeda) who hold that indexical attitudes are special and 'essential indexical skeptics' (e.g. Millikan, Cappelen and Dever and Magidor) who hold that indexical attitudes are not special. In this paper, I argue against the standard assumption. The *de se* and the *de nunc* work differently, in ways that flow from the metaphysical difference in the kind of things that agents – the referents of *de se* attitudes – are and the kind of thing that times – the referents of *de nunc* attitudes – are. Essential indexical skeptics might be right about the *de se*, but essential indexical boosters are right about the *de nunc*. More generally, the *de se* is a potentially distorting lens for an investigation of the *de nunc*. The *de nunc* merits its own investigation.