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The Two Indexical Uses Theory of Proper Names and Frege's Puzzle

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ABSTRACT: To solve Frege’s puzzle, I develop a novel theory of proper names, the “Two Indexical Uses Theory” of proper names (the “TIUT”), according to which proper names are used as *indexicals*. I distinguish two types of indexical uses: (1) ‘Millian’ uses on which a proper name merely refers (contributing its referent alone to the proposition expressed); and (2) ‘Conception-indicating’ uses on which a proper name both refers and conveys the speaker’s “conception of” or “way of taking” the referent at the moment s/he utters the name (contributing both referent and conception to the proposition expressed). Unlike Millianism, the TIUT is consistent with speaker intuitions about cognitive value vis-à-vis Frege’s puzzle about identity sentences and is consistent with speaker intuitions about truth-value vis-à-vis Frege’s puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions. Unlike Descriptivism, the TIUT is not vulnerable to Kripke’s modal, epistemic, or semantic arguments because on the TIUT proper names are always used as rigid designators and lack descriptive meanings—instead possessing *character* (the sort of meaning borne by indexicals). Among theories of proper names, the TIUT is uniquely able to explain how co-referential name pairs such as ‘Clark Kent’/‘Superman’ can simultaneously have the following three properties: (a) rigidity, (b) lack of descriptive meaning, and (c) difference in semantic content. The TIUT explains the difference in cognitive value between identity sentences such as ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’ and ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ by demonstrating that they may be used to semantically express different propositions with identical modal profiles (unlike Descriptivism, according to which they would have different modal profiles). The TIUT explains the difference in truth-value intuited by ordinary speakers between propositional attitude ascriptions such as ‘Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies’ and ‘Lois Lane believes that Superman flies’ by demonstrating that they may be used to semantically express different propositions genuinely differing in truth-value, the former false and the latter true. The TIUT also solves Kripke’s puzzle by explaining how a rational and reflective agent might simultaneously believe P and ¬P and why one may accurately and without inconsistency ascribe the belief both that P and that ¬P to that agent. Hence, we may accurately and without inconsistency report Peter as both believing that Paderewski had musical talent and believing that he did not.

KEYWORDS: Frege’s puzzle, proper names, indexicals, cognitive value, Millianism, Descriptivism, Kripke’s puzzle
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INTRODUCTION

The theory of proper names presented here, the Two Indexical Uses Theory of proper names or “TIUT,” is, to my knowledge, sui generis. The central claim is that proper names are used as indexicals. I distinguish two types of indexical uses: (1) ‘Millian’ uses on which a name merely refers (contributing its bearer/referent alone to the proposition expressed); and (2) ‘Conception-indicating’ uses on which a name both refers and conveys the speaker’s “conception of” or “way of taking” the bearer/referent at the moment s/he utters the name (contributing both referent and conception to the proposition expressed).

The TIUT is designed specifically to solve Frege’s puzzle, as well as other semantic puzzles such as the puzzle I call the ‘Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief’ (see section 1.2, infra) and a related puzzle, Kripke’s Paderewski puzzle. I aim to show that the TIUT is the best theory of proper names because it offers the most comprehensive solution to this set of puzzles. It avoids the problems bedeviling other theories of proper names that pretend to solve the puzzles. On the one hand, we have Descriptivism, which was largely refuted by Saul Kripke in Naming and Necessity. Kripke famously argued that Descriptivism was defective because, inter alia, it held proper names to have descriptive meanings and to be non-rigid designators. The TIUT, in full agreement with Kripke and the current philosophical consensus, maintains that proper names are devoid of descriptive meaning (as indexicals, their meaning is their character) and are always rigid designators. On the other hand, we have Millianism, which makes numerous highly counterintuitive claims. For example, Millians dubiously maintain that the true sentence ‘Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Clark Kent’ semantically expresses the same proposition as the sentence ‘Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman,’ and therefore, according to Millians, Lois Lane does in fact believe that Clark Kent is Superman. Millians
also implausibly claim that the sentences ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’ and ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ semantically express the same proposition—the trivial proposition that a particular individual is identical to himself. The TIUT avoids the absurd implications of Millianism, and, consistent with common sense, maintains that these sentences semantically express different propositions.

The TIUT answers the central question posed by Frege’s puzzle: how can co-referential proper names such as ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ simultaneously be all of the following: (a) rigid, (b) lacking descriptive meaning, and (c) different in semantic content?

Unlike some other anti-Millian theories of proper names, the TIUT recognizes that Millianism gets a lot right, even if it cannot be a fully correct theory of proper names because it cannot solve the puzzles. Most of the time proper names are used just as Millians say—just to refer to their bearers and nothing else. This is so in the case of names occurring in ordinary simple sentences, identity sentences, and within the ‘that’-clauses of propositional attitude ascriptions. A good theory of proper names must take into account the plausibility of the Millian picture vis-à-vis the majority of uses of proper names. However, the failure of Millians to offer plausible solutions to Frege’s puzzle and other semantic puzzles militates in favor of the judgment that proper names must be used in non-Millian ways in some cases. The proper conclusion to draw is that names can be used in at least two ways—a Millian way, where a name just refers to its bearer, and a non-Millian way where the speaker uses a name to refer to its bearer and also to indicate a conception of or way of taking that bearer. In short, I am proposing that names are semantically ambiguous between these two kinds of uses: a ‘Millian’ use and a ‘Conception-indicating’ use.

I am positing a semantic distinction and not a pragmatic one. Some philosophers will object that I am going too far in positing a semantic distinction—perhaps agreeing with my claim that proper names, as well as many classes of expressions, can be used in various ways, but objecting that not all
differences in use mark a *semantic* distinction. However, I do really *do* want to posit a *semantic* distinction. For there is, as far as I can see, no pragmatic mechanism—neither implicature, descriptive enrichment, nor any other pragmatic mechanism—that could explain the fundamentally different ways in which proper names are regularly and consistently used. Unfortunately, there is a dogma in the current philosophy of language according to which the positing of a semantic distinction is viewed as something close to a mortal sin. Wherever possible, according to this dogma, one is to explain away the appearance of a semantic distinction by appealing to pragmatics. However, I think this dogma is too extreme, and some philosophers have recently attacked this dogma with some measure of success. For example, Devitt (2004) and Reimer (1998) argue persuasively that the distinction between attributive and referential uses of definite descriptions is a semantic distinction (and not merely a pragmatic difference in use). They employ an argument that has come to be called “the argument from convention,” according to which the fact that a certain expression is used *regularly* (i.e., with high frequency) and *without* “*special stage setting*” (Devitt 2004, p. 283) to convey some content C, constitutes solid evidence that the expression conventionally (i.e., semantically) means C. Hence, the fact that definite descriptions are regularly used without special stage setting—sometimes attributively and sometimes referentially—is solid evidence that the referential/attributive distinction is semantic, and not pragmatic, in nature. With respect to proper names and the distinction between Millian and Conception-indicating uses that I propose here, I urge that the argument from convention militates in favor of finding a semantic distinction. The existence of two regular uses of proper names without special stage setting—sometimes just to contribute a name’s bearer/referent to the proposition expressed, and sometimes to contribute both the bearer/referent and a conception of it—is solid evidence that we are faced with a genuine semantic distinction. Proper names are semantically ambiguous between Millian and Conception-indicating readings, and this ambiguity can be resolved
only by looking to the speaker’s expressive intent. (I am not suggesting, of course, that we have to be mind readers in order to figure out a speaker’s expressive intent in order to resolve ambiguities. Utterance interpretation generally proceeds via contextual clues, which are a highly reliable guide to the expressive intent of the speaker.)

Even if the reader of this paper should not be convinced that the distinction I wish to draw is semantic in nature, I hope that s/he will nevertheless find the TIUT an interesting and useful examination of proper names in so far as it aptly characterizes the various ways in which proper names may be used, accurately sets out the truth conditions of proper name-containing sentences, and offers a plausible psychological model of how speakers carry out utterance interpretation.
CHAPTER 1
THE PUZZLES TO BE SOLVED

1.1 Frege’s Puzzle

The philosopher and mathematician Gottlob Frege first described the eponymous “Frege’s puzzle” in his seminal 1892 paper On Sense and Reference. There are two versions of the puzzle: the puzzle about identity sentences and the puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions.

First, let us briefly examine the puzzle about identity sentences. Treat the Superman story as non-fictional and consider the following identity sentences, (1) and (2), which differ in one respect only: one co-referential name has been substituted for another.

(1) Clark Kent is Clark Kent
(2) Clark Kent is Superman

In (2) ‘Superman’ is substituted for the second occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ in (1). Consider now the simplest theory of proper names—a theory attributed to the nineteenth-century English philosopher John Stuart Mill and called “Millianism” in his honor: a proper name always and invariably contributes its referent/bearer only and nothing more to the proposition expressed by a sentence in which it occurs. Frege showed that Millianism is false by the following sort of reductio. Suppose that Millianism were true. ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ would each contribute their common bearer/referent—to which I’ll refer throughout this paper as ‘Kent-Super’—to the propositions expressed by sentences (1) and (2) in which they occur. Sentences (1) and (2) would both express the singular proposition that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. This proposition may be schematized as PROP-1.

PROP-1 << Kent-Super, Kent-Super >, identity >>

However, the notion that (1) and (2) express the same proposition is highly counterintuitive. Sentence
(2) is informative to Lois Lane, who does not realize that Clark Kent is the same person as Superman, whereas sentence (1) is not. She might learn something from (2) but not from (1). A rational agent might doubt that (2) is true but not that (1) is. (However, see this footnote for an important qualification). Frege summed up these salient differences between sentences such as (1) and (2) by saying that they differ in Erkenntiswert or ‘cognitive value.’ It would be difficult to explain the difference in cognitive value between (1) and (2) if they expressed the same proposition (as Millians maintain). The simplest and best explanation for the cognitive value difference is that they express different propositions. Hence, they must express different propositions and therefore Millianism must be false.

So here is the puzzle: if Millianism is false, what then is the correct theory of proper names? That is to say, just what are the (different) contributions of the proper names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ to the propositions expressed by sentences (1) and (2) such that we may explain why these sentences differ in cognitive value?

Now let us briefly examine the puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions. Frege noticed that the substitution of one co-referential name in place of another inside the ‘that’-clause of a propositional attitude ascription sentence could change its truth-value, rather than its cognitive value. Consider propositional attitude ascription sentences (3) and (4).

(3) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Clark Kent

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1 Sentence (1) not subject to rational doubt as long as it is uttered to express the trivial proposition that Clark Kent is identical to himself. As I touch upon in section 2.1 and discuss at further length in section 2.9, it is not strictly speaking true to say that natural language sentences of the syntactic form \(a=a\), such as sentence (1), are always uninformative identities, expressing trivial propositions about self-identity whose truth-value can be ascertained by any rational agent merely by inspecting the syntactic form of the sentence. In fact, sentence (1) could be uttered as an informative identity. For example, a man—call him ‘Tom’—might utter (1) to himself to express his belief that the Clark Kent he meets at a party is the same Clark Kent he went to Kindergarten with in Smallville. In such a case, a rational agent could very well wonder whether Tom expressed a true proposition in uttering (1) and could not tell whether (1), as uttered by Tom, is true or false merely by considering its syntactic form. Or, for example, consider Kripke’s Paderewski case. A man named ‘Peter’ might say ‘Paderewski the pianist has musical talent, but Paderewski the politician surely does not,’ failing to realize that the pianist and the politician are the same person. Someone might utter ‘But Peter, Paderewski is Paderewski’ to Peter in an attempt to convince him that Paderewski the politician is the same person as Paderewski the musician. No one can tell whether the sentence ‘… Paderewski is Paderewski’ is used here to express a true or false proposition just by considering its syntactic form.
(4) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman

In (4) ‘Superman’ is substituted for the second occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ in (3), inside the ‘that’-clause. According to the intuitions of ordinary speakers, sentence (3) is true and sentence (4) is false. Sentence (3) is true because Lois Lane is acquainted with Clark Kent and, being a rational person, she realizes that he is identical to himself. Sentence (4) is false because, according to the Superman story, Lois Lane does not realize that Clark Kent is the same person as Superman and the negation of (4), either sentence ¬ (4) or (4n), could be truthfully uttered to express the state of her ignorance.

¬ (4) Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent is Superman

(4n) Lois Lane does not believe that Clark Kent is Superman

Differences in truth-value resulting from substitution may also occur where the ‘that’-clause is not an identity statement. For example, ordinary speakers judge (5) to be false and (6) to be true.

(5) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies

(6) Lois Lane believes that Superman flies

However, Millianism entails that the intuitions of ordinary speakers about the truth-value of sentence pairs (3)-(4) and (5)-(6) are erroneous. According to Millianism, (3) and (4) both express the proposition that Lois Lane believes PROP-1, i.e., the proposition that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. Since

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2 Note the distinction between ¬ (4) and (4n). These sentences do not express the same proposition, even if ordinary speakers do not typically carefully distinguish between them. Not believing a proposition (failing to believe a proposition) is not the same thing as disbelieving a proposition. If I have neither looked outside my window nor heard the weather report and I am rational, I neither believe nor disbelieve that it is raining outside. I suspend judgment. In such a case, it would be correct to report me as “not believing it is raining outside,” for I lack the belief that it is raining outside. I also lack the belief that it is not raining out. On the other hand, if I look out of my window and I see it is bright and sunny, I would not suspend judgment. I would disbelieve that it is raining outside. We may not presume pre-theoretically that ¬ (4) and (4n) express the same proposition. We should distinguish between them, even if they are often used synonymously in ordinary speech. ¬ (4) and (4n) are both true because Lois Lane lacks the belief that Clark Kent is Superman, and she also disbelieves that Clark Kent is Superman because she is actively disposed to scoff and/or laugh at the suggestion, were anyone to make it, that Clark Kent is Superman.
Lois believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super,\(^3\) (3) and (4) are both true. Contrary to our intuition about the matter, Millianism has it that (4) is true and therefore Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman. According to Millianism, (5) and (6) both express the proposition that Lois Lane believes that Kent-Super flies. Since Lois believes that proposition,\(^4\) (5) and (6) are both true. Contrary to our intuition about the matter, Millianism has it that (5) is true and Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies. We should reject Millianism because the simplest and best explanation for our intuition that there are truth-value differences is the supposition that our intuition is correct and the members of these sentence pairs express different propositions with different truth-values.

If Millianism is false as the two *reductio* arguments above strongly suggest, we have to propose an alternate theory of proper names. Frege’s puzzle asks: what does a proper name contribute to the proposition expressed by a sentence in which it occurs such that we may explain the cognitive and truth-value differences illustrated above? To solve the puzzle, we require a theory of proper names according to which co-referential names such as ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ may have different contents and make different semantic contributions to the propositions expressed by sentence pairs (1)-(2), (3)-(4), and (5)-(6), such that the members of these sentence pairs express different propositions.

In his 1892 paper *On Sense and Reference*, Frege thought he could solve the problem he had raised for Millianism. He denied the Millian thesis that a proper name contributes its bearer/referent to the proposition. In very rough sketch, Frege proposed instead that a proper name contributes its *Sinn* or “sense” to the proposition.\(^5\) Frege was not entirely clear about what senses are. Most philosophers

\(^3\) She believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super both when she conceives him as Superman and when she conceives him as Clark Kent. She would assent to both ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman is Superman.’

\(^4\) She believes that Kent-Super flies when she conceives him as Superman. According to Millianism, (5) is true because it expresses the proposition that Lois believes that Kent-Super flies, full stop, without respect to how she conceives Kent-Super when she judges that he flies.

\(^5\) According to Frege, the sense of a whole sentence, which Frege calls a *Gedanke* or “thought” (in modern parlance, a “Fregean proposition”), is composed of the senses of the words occurring in it. Proper names, as well as concept-words, contribute their senses to the thought or proposition expressed by the sentence in which they occur. (See Textor, 150).
have interpreted a sense to be a condition that an individual or object uniquely satisfies, a condition that might be given by a definite description (or collection of definite descriptions). The referent of a proper name would be the object or individual uniquely denoted by said definite description (or collection thereof). For example, the sense of the name ‘Clark Kent’ might be given by the definite description the mild-mannered reporter from Smallville working for the Daily Planet. The sense of the name ‘Superman’ might be given by the definite description the caped superhero that protects Metropolis. The names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ would co-refer because these definite descriptions denote the same individual. Identity sentence (1) would be uninformative because it would express the trivial and obviously true proposition that the mild-mannered reporter from Smallville working for the Daily Planet is the mild-mannered reporter from Smallville working for the Daily Planet. Identity sentence (2) would be informative because it would express the non-trivial and non-obviously true proposition that the mild-mannered reporter from Smallville working for the Daily Planet is the caped superhero that protects Metropolis.

Bertrand Russell (1905) proposed a

6 In his Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article on Meaning (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/meaning/#FrePro), Jeff Speaks explains why it is reasonable to interpret Frege as intending senses to be given by definite descriptions or clusters thereof:

Here is one initially plausible way of explaining what the sense of a name is. We know that, whatever the content of a name is, it must be something that determines as a reference the object for which the name stands; and we know that, if Fregeanism is true, this must be something other than the object itself. A natural thought, then, is that the content of a name—its sense—is some condition that the referent of the name uniquely satisfies. Co-referential names can differ in sense because there is always more than one condition that a given object uniquely satisfies. (For example, Superman/Clark Kent uniquely satisfies both the condition of being the superhero Lois most admires, and the newspaperman she least admires.) Given this view, it is natural to then hold that names have the same meanings as definite descriptions—phrases of the form ‘the so-and-so.’ After all, phrases of this sort seem to be designed to pick out the unique object, if any, which satisfies the condition following the ‘the.’

7 But note that in propositional attitude contexts, the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ would not co-refer, according to Frege. In propositional attitude contexts proper names would refer to their senses, rather than their usual referent, Kent-Super. So ‘Clark Kent’ would refer to the sense of ‘Clark Kent’ instead of referring to Kent-Super, and ‘Superman’ would refer to the sense of ‘Superman’ instead of referring to Kent-Super.

8 The received view is that Frege was a Descriptivist and that he would have endorsed this sort of solution to the puzzle about identity sentences. However, some philosophers have argued that Frege was not in fact a Descriptivist. See, e.g., Burge, T. Sinning Against Frege, in Philosophical Review 88, 1979, pp. 398-432. I recognize that Frege’s views are subject to various interpretations. The genuine nature of Frege’s views is however orthogonal to the purposes of this paper so I shall not be concerned with the issue here.
superficially similar theory according to which proper names abbreviate definite descriptions. Despite important differences between Frege and Russell’s theories, both are often referred to as the Frege-Russell theory of proper names (Kripke, 1980) or as “Descriptivism,” because both views propose that the meaning of a proper name may be given by a definite description or collection thereof.

In his seminal work Naming and Necessity (1980), Kripke presented powerful arguments against Descriptivism that thoroughly undermined it in the view of most philosophers. After Naming and Necessity, Descriptivism would have few defenders. Kripke established at least two important widely accepted theses about proper names. First, he showed that proper names are rigid designators. Thus, ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ refer to the same individual, Kent-Super, in the actual world and in every possible world. This entails that the proposition expressed by sentence (1) has the same modal profile as the proposition expressed by sentence (2). Problematically for Descriptivism, according to most versions of it proper names are not rigid designators and (1) and (2) would express propositions with different modal profiles. Second, Kripke made a strong case for the proposition that proper names are not synonymous with definite descriptions or collections thereof. So even if a large percentage of a language community were to associate the name ‘Superman’ with the definite

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9 I write about proper names here as if they were obstinately rigid designators, as opposed to persistently rigid designators, although I do not believe that the arguments I make in this paper ride on which notion of rigidity is correct. A designator is obstinately rigid if it designates the same object in every possible world, even in those worlds in which that object does not exist. By contrast, an expression is persistently rigid if it designates the same object in every possible world in which that object exists and designates nothing in those worlds in which that object does not exist. The distinction was expressly drawn by Salmon (1981). Kripke alternates between these two conceptions of rigidity in his writings, although more often than not he gives the impression that he favors persistent rigidity. Many philosophers have argued that the notion of obstinate rigidity is the correct one. See, e.g., Branquinho, João. 2003. “In Defense of Obstinacy.” Nous-Supplement: Phil. Perspectives 17: 1-23.

10 Meaning that the propositions expressed have the same truth-value in every possible world.

11 “Rigidified Descriptivism” proposes that the associated definite descriptions are to be understood as rigidified with the actually or dhat operator so that the name ‘Superman’ would mean, e.g., the actual super hero that protects Metropolis and the name ‘Clark Kent’ would mean the actual mild-mannered reporter from Smallville who works for the Daily Planet. On this account, the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ would differ in content and would indeed be rigid designators. Sentences (1) and (2) would express propositions with the same modal profile. However, rigidified descriptivism is implausible because, as Kripke convincingly argued in Naming and Necessity, proper names are devoid of descriptive meaning.
description the superhero that protects Metropolis, the name ‘Superman’ would not be synonymous with that definite description. In short, Kripke persuasively argued that proper names are devoid of descriptive meaning. In this paper, I presuppose that these Kripkean theses—that proper names are rigid designators and devoid of descriptive meaning—are correct.

Subsequent to Naming and Necessity and the widespread rejection of Descriptivism, many philosophers revived Millianism, developing modern versions of it aiming to explain away or assuage its counterintuitive implications. I do not examine these modern Millian theories in this paper.12 I think that Millianism is false and the revival of Millianism represented an overreaction to Kripke’s arguments. Many philosophers jumped to the conclusion that because Kripke showed that proper names were devoid of descriptive meaning, they must therefore be devoid of all meaning. They must be meaningless “tags” (Barcan Marcus, 1961) or labels that speakers use merely to refer to objects and individuals. I shall argue in this paper that proper names do in fact have meanings. They are not descriptive meanings but rather character, the sort of meanings borne by indexicals.13

Although Kripke showed that proper names do not have descriptive meanings, at the same time we must recognize that speakers do frequently associate descriptive properties with proper names. For example, most of us associate different properties with the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman.’ When we utter ‘Clark Kent,’ we are typically thinking about Kent-Super under a mild-mannered reporter conception, and when we utter ‘Superman’ we are typically thinking about Kent-Super under a strong superhero conception. Although these conceptions do not constitute the meanings of the proper names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman,’ nevertheless it is clear that speakers sometimes use these proper names to convey conceptions to their audience. Speakers would typically utter sentence (2)

(2) Clark Kent is Superman

12 A slim majority of philosophers today are Millians or sympathetic towards it.
13 The expression “character” for the meaning of an indexical expression is due to Kaplan (1989).
to pick out two conceptions of Kent-Super—a ‘Clark Kent-y’ mild-mannered reporter conception and a ‘Superman-y’ strong superhero conception—and say that both conceptions relate to the same individual, Kent-Super.

Speakers would typically utter sentence ¬ (4)

¬ (4) Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent is Superman
to say that Lois Lane disbelieves that Kent-Super thought of under a Clark Kent-y conception is the same person as Kent-Super thought of under a Superman-y conception. Speakers would utter ¬ (5)

¬ (5) Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent flies
to say that Lois Lane disbelieves that Kent-Super flies when she thinks of him under a Clark Kent-y conception. In these cases, proper names are used both to refer to an individual and to convey a conception of that individual. This flies directly in the face of the Millian claim that the sole function of proper names is to refer.

At the same time, proper names are sometimes (indeed, probably most of the time) used as Millians claim—just to contribute their referents and nothing further. Speakers mainly use names simply to call their audience’s attention to the right individual or object and say something about it. They communicate conceptions only under the circumstances in which there are two (or more) salient conceptions of an object or individual in a conversational context and the speaker desires to distinguish between them, as in the Frege’s puzzle cases illustrated above (involving Lois Lane, Clark Kent and Superman). See section 2.1, infra, for further discussion of my claim that names may be employed in these two sorts of ways: to refer and convey conceptions; and to refer and nothing else.

In light of the foregoing considerations, to solve Frege’s puzzle I propose that we need a theory of proper names that respects the following six theses:
1. Proper names are rigid designators [From Kripke’s modal argument].

2. Proper names do not have descriptive meanings [From Kripke’s modal, semantic, and epistemic arguments].

3. Identity sentences like (1)-(2) express different propositions with the same modal profile [That they have the same modal profile follows from Kripke’s modal argument and the thesis that names are rigid designators; that they express different propositions follows from intuitions about cognitive value differences brought to light by Frege’s puzzle about identity sentences].

4. Propositional attitude ascriptions like (3)-(4) and (5)-(6) express different propositions differing in truth-value [From intuitions about truth-value differences brought to light by Frege’s puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions].

5. Sometimes proper names are used merely to refer, contributing only their referents to the propositions expressed.

6. Sometimes proper names are used both to refer and to convey conceptions. They contribute something other than merely their referents to the propositions expressed.

In this paper, I shall elaborate how the TIUT solves Frege’s puzzle while respecting theses 1-6, supra. The TIUT claims proper names have two uses, each of which is indexical in nature. When a speaker uses a name in a ‘Millian’ way, its content and its contribution to the proposition expressed by the sentence in which it occurs is its bearer/referent alone. When a speaker uses a name in a ‘Conception-indicating’ way, the name contributes both its bearer/referent and a conception of it to the proposition expressed. Proper names are always rigid designators whether used in a Millian or Conception-indicating way and are devoid of descriptive meaning—they have instead character, the sort of meaning borne by indexicals. Hence, the TIUT is not a Descriptivist theory of proper names and is not vulnerable to the arguments Kripke marshaled against Descriptivism in Naming and Necessity.

As I alluded to in footnote 1 supra, there is a minor flaw in the way that Frege stated the puzzle about identity sentence in Sense and Reference. Frege assumed incorrectly that natural language

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14 I leave open the possibility that there may be some uses of proper names that are not rigid. But I presuppose that all of the occurrences in both versions of Frege’s puzzle are rigid uses.
identity sentences of the form \( a=a \), such as (1) (‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’), were always uninformative and one could tell that they were true just by inspection of their syntactic form, whereas sentences of the form \( a=b \), such as (2) (‘Clark Kent is Superman’), were informative and one could not tell whether they were true or false merely by inspection of their syntactic form. However, the dichotomy is false. In fact, natural language sentences of the form \( a=a \) can be either informative or uninformative. For example, (as already discussed above), a man—call him ‘Tom’—might meet Clark Kent, the reporter for the Daily Planet, at a party and suspect that he is the same Clark Kent he went to Kindergarten with in Smallville. Tom might utter sentence (1) (‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’) to himself to express his belief that the Clark Kent from the party is the Clark Kent with whom he attended Kindergarten in Smallville. In such a case, a rational agent hearing Tom uttering this sentence could very well wonder whether Tom expressed a true proposition. Tom himself might harbor some doubts about whether what he said is true. Here, one cannot tell that (1) is true based merely on the fact that the same syntactic string ‘Clark Kent’ appears on both the left and right sides of the ‘is.’

The TIUT explains why sentence (1) could express either an informative or an uninformative identity. Whether an uninformative or informative identity is expressed will depend on whether the speaker uses the names in a Millian or Conception-indicating way. If both names are used in a Millian way in (1), then a trivial and uninformative identity is expressed. Each occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ has the same semantic content, Kent-Super, and the sentence therefore expresses the proposition that Kent-Super is identical to himself. However, if each occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ in (1) is used in a Conception-indicating way and the speaker attaches a different conception to each tokening (each tokening

15 Or consider Kripke’s Paderewski case: a man named Peter might not realize that Paderewski, a famous Polish politician, is Paderewski the famous Polish pianist, believing that Politicians rarely have musical talent. Peter might utter: ‘Paderewski the pianist had real musical talent, but not Paderewski the politician.’ One might say to Peter ‘But Peter, Paderewski is Paderewski’ to inform him that Paderewski the politician is the same person as Paderewski the pianist. Here, one cannot tell whether the sentence ‘Paderewski is Paderewski’ expresses a true proposition just by inspecting its syntactic form.

16 And even if Tom used the names in a Conception-indicating way, sentence (1) would express an uninformative identity as long as Tom intended each occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ to pick out the very same conception of Kent-Super, instead of different conceptions of him.
therefore having a different semantic content), an informative identity is expressed and its truth-value cannot be discerned based on syntactic form.

The TIUT offers an attractive solution to Frege’s puzzle because it respects speaker intuitions about cognitive value and truth-value. It shows how co-referential names such as ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ can be rigid, as well as devoid of descriptive meaning, and yet differ in semantic content—something I believe no other extant theory of proper names does. It navigates the waters between Descriptivism and Millianism, retaining their plausible parts while avoiding the implausible aspects each presents. It explains the difference in cognitive value between sentences (1) and (2) by demonstrating that they express different propositions with the same modal profile (by contrast with most versions of Descriptivism, according to which (1) and (2) would express different propositions with different modal profiles). It explains our powerful intuition of a difference in truth-value between propositional attitude ascriptions sentences (3) and (4), and between (5) and (6), by demonstrating that they express different propositions genuinely differing in truth-value (by contrast with Millianism, which counterintuitively claims that the apparent difference in truth-value is erroneous and these ascription sentence pairs express the same proposition with the same truth-value). The TIUT also offers an attractive solution to Kripke’s Puzzle (Kripke, 1979) (see section 2.12, infra) explaining how and why a rational and reflective agent might simultaneously believe P and ¬P (e.g., the rational and reflective Lois Lane both believes and disbelieves the singular proposition that Kent-Super can fly) and why an ascriber may accurately and consistently ascribe the belief both that P and that ¬P to that agent. (See section 1.2, infra, discussing the related “Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief”).

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17 With the possible exception of “rigidified descriptivism.” See footnote 11, supra, for definition of rigidified descriptivism. Rigidified Descriptivism deals nicely with Kripke’s objections to Descriptivism in his modal argument, but cannot handle the worries Kripke raised in his epistemic and semantic arguments. Unlike rigidified descriptivism, the TIUT is not vulnerable to any of the arguments Kripke marshaled against Descriptivism in Naming and Necessity.

18 On “Rigidified Descriptivism” proper names are rigid designators.

19 She believes the proposition when she conceives of Kent-Super under a Superman-y conception, and disbelieves it when she thinks of Kent-Super under a Clark Kent-y conception.
1.2 The Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief

The ‘Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief’ challenges us to explain how an agent’s expressing and believing inconsistent propositions can be compatible with his or her rationality. Ordinarily, we would say that believing inconsistent propositions is incompatible with an agent’s rationality. For example, if an agent were to claim (and not in jest) that it is raining outside now and that it is not raining outside now, we would judge that agent irrational. However, according to both the TIUT and Millianism, Lois Lane, who we may presume is a rational and reflective agent, believes many inconsistent singular propositions. For example, suppose someone asked her to name a non-avian flying being and in response she uttered sentence (8).

(8) Superman flies

According to the TIUT, she would use the name ‘Superman’ in a Millian way here—just to refer to Kent-Super. She would not use the name ‘Superman’ in a Conception-indicating way to make her Superman-y way of conceiving him salient and contrast this with her Clark Kent-y way of conceiving him because she has no idea that these are different conceptions of the very same individual and she is not drawing any contrast. See section 2.1 infra, for further discussion of this point. Likewise, if someone asked Lois to name a non-avian being incapable of flight, she might utter ¬(7) in response.

¬(7) Clark Kent does not fly

Again, she would use ‘Clark Kent’ in a Millian way—just to refer to Kent-Super. Since the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are used in both (8) and ¬(7) in a Millian way, they contribute the same thing to the proposition expressed, to wit, their common referent, Kent-Super, and nothing more. Hence, sentence (8), as uttered by Lois, would express the singular proposition that Kent-Super flies,

20 Assume that the agent means that it is both raining and not raining in the same place at the same time in the same way.
and sentence ¬ (7) would express the singular proposition that Kent-Super does not fly. In uttering (8) and ¬ (7), Lois Lane would contradict herself. Assuming that Lois believes the propositions expressed by sentence (8) and ¬ (7)—sentences which she understands and accepts—then she believes inconsistent propositions. She simultaneously believes a proposition and its negation. How do we square Lois believing inconsistent propositions with her being rational?

To solve the problem, we will have to claim that Lois has these inconsistent beliefs because of ignorance, not irrationality. There is something she fails to realize, and this explains her expression of, and belief in, the inconsistent propositions expressed by (8) and ¬ (7). She is rational despite believing inconsistent propositions. She has what I shall call ‘rationally inconsistent beliefs.’ A theory of proper names must be able to solve the problem of rational inconsistent belief by specifying what Lois Lane fails to realize—what she is ignorant of vis-à-vis the identity of Clark Kent and Superman. And it begs the question to say merely that Lois “fails to realize that Clark Kent is Superman” unless one specifies what failing to realize that Clark Kent is Superman consists in. Once it is clear exactly what Lois fails to realize, and why, the charge of irrationality will not stick: her inconsistency can be explained by this ignorance rather than irrationality. The TIUT solves the problem of rational inconsistent belief (see section 2.8, infra) by showing what Lois Lane fails to realize, and why, and is therefore shows that her inconsistent beliefs are due to this ignorance rather than irrationality.

Millians must address the problem of rational inconsistent belief as well, but I shall argue that they cannot solve the problem. Unlike the TIUT, which claims (in accord with common-sense intuitions) that propositional attitude ascriptions (3) and (4) express different propositions, Millians posit that they express the same proposition. Therefore, Millians must claim that an enlightened

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21 That Lois Lane believes the propositions expressed by sentences ¬ (7) and (8) follows from the “weak disquotation principle” (Kripke, 1979), which says: if a competent, sincere, reflective, and rational speaker s who understands a sentence S is disposed to accept S, and believes S to be true, then s believes the proposition semantically expressed by S.
speaker (i.e., a speaker who knows that Clark Kent is Superman) such as Jimmy Olson would contradict himself if he uttered the seemingly true propositional attitude ascriptions (3) and (4n).

(3) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Clark Kent

(4n) Lois Lane does not believe that Clark Kent is Superman

According to Millianism, (3) and (4n) would express inconsistent propositions—the respective propositions that Lois believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super and that Lois fails to believe that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. That is, in uttering (3) and (4n), Olson would express the proposition that it is the case that Lois Lane believes Kent-Super is Kent-Super and that it is not the case that she believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. Olson would contradict himself and express inconsistent propositions in uttering (3) and (4n). The problem of rational inconsistent belief is hence a deeper problem for Millianism than for the TIUT, since Millians have to explain why both rational unenlightened and enlightened speakers contradict themselves. For the TIUT the problem is limited only to unenlightened speakers such as Lois Lane who do not realize that Clark Kent is Superman.

I do not think that the problem of rational inconsistent belief could be solved for enlightened speakers, were it to be the case that enlightened speakers such as Olson really contradicted themselves in uttering (3) and (4n) as Millians claim. The unenlightened Lois Lane is ignorant of the identity of Clark Kent and Superman, and this ignorance (whatever it may consist in), rather than irrationality, explains why she has inconsistent beliefs with respect to Kent-Super, such as both believing and disbelieving that he flies. By contrast, the enlightened Jimmy Olson fully realizes that Clark Kent is Superman and he is fully informed about Lois’ confused and erroneous beliefs about the identity. Olson is not ignorant of any facts whatsoever about Kent-Super or about Lois Lane that would explain why he makes (allegedly) inconsistent statements when he when he utters (3) and (4n), leaving

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22 Presume throughout the paper that Jimmy Olson is aware of the identity of Clark Kent and Superman, i.e., he is “enlightened.” This may conflict factually with various versions of the Superman legend.
irrationality as the only possible explanation. But Olson is not irrational. Any rational enlightened speaker (perhaps even a die-hard Millian philosopher in his or her moments of inattention to his or her philosophical commitments) would unhesitatingly utter (3) and (4n) to ascribe beliefs to Lois. So we are left with no plausible explanation of Olson’s inconsistency—neither ignorance nor irrationality explains it. This casts doubt on the Millian claim that that (3) and (4n) express inconsistent propositions (and, by implication, that (3) and (4) express the same proposition), and thereby constitutes a reductio of Millianism.\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) For a Millian response to a similar point made by Stephen Schiffer, see Salmon (2006). On Salmon’s view, the enlightened Olson contradicts himself for a very different sort of reason than the unenlightened Lois does. Olson is ignorant about the correct semantic theory of proper names (which Salmon takes to be Millianism), while Lois is ignorant about ordinary, non-theoretical facts. Because of Olson’s ignorance of the (supposed) truth of Millianism, he erroneously takes (3) and (4) to express different propositions and therefore he does not realize that he contradicts himself when uttering (3) and (4n). I do not find Salmon’s claim plausible, but I do address it in this paper.
CHAPTER 2
THE TWO INDEXICALS THEORY OF PROPER NAMES
AND ITS SOLUTION TO THE PUZZLES

According to the TIUT, proper names have two uses. When a proper name is used in a ‘Millian way’ it merely contributes its referent to the proposition expressed by the sentence in which it occurs. When a proper name is used in a ‘Conception-indicating’ way, it contributes its referent as well as a conception of it to the proposition. Names are rigid designators and function as indexicals whether they are used in a Millian or a Conception-indicating way. I discuss the reasons for supposing that names have these two uses in section 2.1, below. In section 2.2, I introduce several key terms of art I use to characterize the character and content of proper names on their two uses, which I set out in sections 2.3 (Millian uses) and 2.4 (Conception-indicating uses). In the sections thereafter, I show how the TIUT solves the puzzles, including Frege’s puzzle (both versions), the Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief, and Kripke’s Paderewski Puzzle.

2.1 The Two Uses of Proper Names

Frege’s puzzles—both the puzzle about identity sentences and the puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions—focus a spotlight on situations in which the conceptions that speakers associate with proper names are important pieces of information they convey when they utter them. As discussed in section 1.1 supra, speakers would typically utter sentence (2)

(2) Clark Kent is Superman

...
\neg (4) \quad \text{Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent is Superman}

to say that Lois Lane disbelieves that Kent-Super conceived in a Clark Kent-y way is the same person as Kent-Super conceived in a Superman-y way. They use sentence \neg (5)

\neg (5) \quad \text{Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent flies}

to say that Lois Lane disbelieves that Kent-Super flies when she conceives him in a Clark Kent-y way.

Even the two occurrences of ‘Clark Kent’ in sentence (1)

(1) \quad \text{Clark Kent is Clark Kent}

could, under certain circumstances, be used to pick out different conceptions of the same individual. For example, consider again the example discussed in section 1.1, supra: a man named ‘Tom’ meets Clark Kent, the reporter for the Daily Planet, at a party and suspects that he is the Clark Kent he went to Kindergarten with in Smallville. Tom utters (1) to himself to express his belief that the Clark Kent from the party is the same Clark Kent he went to Kindergarten with in Smallville. Here, (1) is used not to express a trivial self-identity (that an individual is identical to himself)—but rather to say something informative. The two tokenings of ‘Clark Kent’ in (1) allude to difference conceptions of Kent-Super—one the conception of an adult man met at a party and the other of a Kindergartner. Alternatively, consider Kripke’s Paderewski case (1979). A man named ‘Peter’ might say ‘Paderewski the pianist has musical talent, but Paderewski the politician surely does not,’ failing to realize that the pianist and the politician are the same person. Someone might say to Peter ‘But Peter, Paderewski is Paderewski’ to inform him that Paderewski the politician is the same person as Paderewski the musician. Here, ‘… Paderewski is Paderewski’ is used to express an informative proposition and not to point out the trivial fact that Paderewski is self-identical. The tokenings of ‘Paderewski’ allude to
difference conceptions of the man—one the conception of a pianist and the other of a politician.

At the same time, in some conversational contexts (perhaps in most), speakers lack the intent to convey conceptions when they utter a name. In most cases, speakers use names not to draw contrasts between what is or is not the case depending on how an object or individual is conceived (e.g., contrasting Lois Lane’s varying beliefs with respect to Kent-Super depending on how she conceives him) but merely to direct the audience’s attention to the right object so that the speaker can say something about the object.

There is ample evidence that proper names are often used merely to pick out their referent. According to Lycan (2000), it is “undeniable” that a proper name may be used inside the ‘that’-clause of propositional attitude ascriptions “just to refer to its bearer, without any further suggestion about the way in which the subject of the belief sentence (the “ascribee”) would have represented the bearer.” Lycan (2000) offers the following example:

“Suppose that Smith and Jones are among the few people who know that their acquaintance Jacques is in fact the notorious jewel thief that has been terrorizing Paris' wealthy set, called “Le Chat” in the popular press and by the gendarmes. Smith and Jones read in the newspaper after a particularly daring but flawed robbery that gendarmes believe “Le Chat dropped the fistful of anchovies as he or she ran.” Smith and Jones say to each other, “The gendarmes think Jacques dropped the anchovies as he ran.”

Here, it is clear that Smith and Jones’ use of the name ‘Jacques’ is not intended to suggest that the gendarmes would use the name ‘Jacques’ to refer to the thief. In fact, the gendarmes would do no such thing. They would refer to the thief only using the name ‘Le Chat.’ The gendarmes have no idea that Jacques is Le Chat. Smith and Jones nevertheless use ‘Jacques’ to refer to the thief because they are indifferent to the way that the gendarmes conceive the thief and their concern in uttering this sentence to one another is merely to say of their acquaintance, who is the thief, that the gendarmes believe he dropped the anchovies. Any name that refers to their acquaintance Jacques/Le Chat (any name with which both Smith and Jones are mutually familiar) will do, and any conceptions that either they or the gendarmes might associate with one name or the other is irrelevant for the purposes of communication.
with one another in this context.\textsuperscript{24}

English has a convention for expressly indicating that a speaker is using a proper name in a propositional attitude ascription just to refer. One may use a “syntactically \textit{de re} belief ascription.” That is, one places “of” in front of a proper name and positions it outside of the ‘that’-clause of a propositional attitude ascription. Although the sentence ‘Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies’ strikes us as false, the sentence ‘Lois Lane believes \textit{of} Clark Kent that he flies’ is indubitably true.\textsuperscript{25} She believes this \textit{of} him because she believes Superman can fly, and Clark Kent is Superman.\textsuperscript{26} Here, the “of” makes it clear that the speaker intends the name “Clark Kent” not to call up in his or her audience the conceptions ordinarily associated with the name; the speaker is rather using the name merely as a device of pure reference to designate a particular individual, who is sometimes referred to as ‘Clark Kent’ and sometimes as ‘Superman,’ and then indicate a belief that Lois Lane has with respect to this individual. Here we have an example of a proper name used merely to refer. As the example from Lycan (cited above) shows, ordinary propositional attitude ascriptions \textit{without} the “of,” i.e., ascriptions that are \textit{not} syntactically \textit{de re}, also readily admit of a \textit{de re} reading. The \textit{de re} reading

\textsuperscript{24} Lycan also points out that definite descriptions, as well as proper names, can be used inside the ‘that’-clause of a propositional attitude ascription just to refer and not to suggest anything about the way in which the ascribee conceives of the object or individual denoted by that definite description. He writes:

“Consider

(3) Columbus reckoned that Castro’s island was only a few miles from India.

We all know what one would mean in asserting (3); the speaker would mean that when Columbus sighted Cuba he thought that he was already in the East Indies and was approaching India proper. Of course, being 450 years early, Columbus did not know anything about Fidel Castro; yet we can assert (3) with no presumption that its complement clause represents things in the way that Columbus himself represented them. The speaker makes this reference to Cuba without at all assuming that Columbus would have referred to Cuba in that way or in any parallel or analogous way. So it seems undeniable that there are transparent positions inside belief sentences, in which the referring expression does just refer to its bearer, without any further suggestion about the way in which the subject of the belief sentence would have represented the bearer. Singular terms can be and are often understood transparently.”

\textsuperscript{25} One could also write this syntactically \textit{de re} ascription as ‘Clark Kent is such that Lois believes that he flies,’ although such a construction is less common in ordinary parlance.

\textsuperscript{26} She also simultaneously believes of him that he cannot fly, since she believes he cannot fly when she thinks of him under a mild-mannered reporter conception.
is, I think, the default reading of propositional attitude ascriptions. I surmise that a speaker may resort to a syntactically de re sentence structure to avoid a potential misunderstanding by his audience—where the speaker reckons that his audience may fail to accord his utterance of an ascription sentence the de re reading s/he intends. For example, consider again Lycan’s example, supra. We can imagine that Smith might turn to Jones and utter ‘The gendarmes think Jacques dropped the anchovies as he ran’ and Jones might erroneously take Smith’s use of the name ‘Jacques’ to imply that the gendarmes have found out that Jacques is Le Chat, even if Smith has no intention of suggesting any such thing. To avoid implying this, Smith could use the syntactically de re ascription ‘The gendarmes believe of Jacques that he dropped the anchovies as he ran.’ However, he would not have to resort to the syntactically de re ascription form, given that there is a perfectly natural de re reading of the non-syntactically de re ascription sentence.

Let us consider a further example of a non-syntactically de re propositional attitude ascription where a speaker may intend a de re reading. Suppose I utter “Everyone who has ever heard him sing believes that Elton John has a great voice.” ‘Elton John’ is the stage name of the famous pop star whose birth name was ‘Reginald Dwight.’ By using the name ‘Elton John’ in this ascription sentence, am I restricting myself to saying that those who have heard Elton John sing qua famous pop singer named ‘Elton John’ thinks he has a good voice? Or could I very well intend my utterance to mean that everyone who has heard Elton John sing thought he had a good voice, whether they knew him as ‘Reginald Dwight’ or ‘Elton John,’ or whether they heard him sing before or after he became a famous pop star with a flashy persona? I think the latter is the case. I could very well intend a de re reading of ‘Elton John,’ uttering the name just to refer to that individual regardless of how conceived, and say that any person who ever heard him sing, from his childhood music teacher up to one of his biggest fans as a pop star, thought he had a great voice. I would intend that my audience interpret my utterance in such a way as to abstract from any conceptions they might happen to associate with the name ‘Elton
Here is another example of a propositional attitude ascription where a speaker uses a name inside the ‘that’-clause of a propositional attitude ascription as a device of pure reference. Suppose that Jimmy Olson, Perry White, and Perry White's secretary, Janet Smith, were all “enlightened” about the identity of Clark Kent and Superman (i.e., they all realize that Clark Kent is Superman). Furthermore, they all mutually know that each of them is enlightened. One morning, Olson says to White: “Clark Kent is so tall, he could probably play in the NBA. He's over seven feet tall!” White is somewhat skeptical about Olson’s judgment of Clark Kent’s height. That afternoon, White remarks to Smith, his secretary: “Jimmy Olson believes that Clark Kent is over seven feet tall. But I think he’s more like 6’ 9’’.” Because White knows that Smith knows that Clark Kent is Superman and he knows that Smith knows that Olson knows this fact as well, White could just as well have said to Smith: “Jimmy Olson believes that Superman is over seven feet tall.” Either of these propositional attitude ascriptions would, under the circumstances described, communicate the very same information. White could use either of the names of Kent-Super, ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman,’ to refer to him, and he would not have to be concerned about any conceptions that he, Olson, or Smith (his audience) might associate with those names. In this conversational context, conceptions associated with names make no difference with respect to the information communicated. The speaker is at liberty to be indifferent to which name he uses in the ‘that’-clause because he uses the name just to refer, and given the audience he is addressing, any name that refers to Kent-Super (with which his audience is familiar) will communicate the same information.

Now let us consider an example of a simple sentence (i.e., a non-propositional attitude ascription) in which a proper name is used just to refer. Consider again what Olson said to White in 27

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27 Of course, I will want to argue that one could use the name ‘Elton John’ to be Conception-indicating, picking out the man under his famous performer persona. My point here is that it seems undeniable that a speaker could utter this sentence intending a de re reading.
the above paragraph: “Clark Kent is so tall, he could probably play in the NBA. He's over seven feet tall!” Surely Olson uttered the name ‘Clark Kent’ just to refer to Kent-Super and not to communicate a Clark Kent-y conception of him to Olson. After all, White and Olson mutually know that they are both enlightened about the identity of Clark Kent and Superman. Olson and White both know that if Clark Kent is over seven feet tall, then so is Superman. Olson could have made the same claim about Kent-Super’s height using either the name ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman,’ and either way he would have made the very same claim and White would have understood him as making that claim regardless of which name he used. Differing conceptions of Kent-Super are irrelevant to whether what Olson said is true or false, and both Olson and White are aware of this.

Unenlightened speakers such as Lois Lane can (and often do) use the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in Millian ways—just to refer. For example, suppose that Lois Lane is asked to name a non-avian flying being and in response utters (8).

(8) Superman flies

Here, she uses the name ‘Superman’ just to refer to Kent-Super. She would not use the name ‘Superman’ to make her Superman-y way of conceiving him salient and contrast this with a Clark Kent-y way of conceiving him. She has no idea that these are different conceptions of the very same individual. As far as she knows she only has one way of conceiving him. When she utters (8), Clark Kent is not on her mind, nor does she feel any need to distinguish between Clark Kent and Superman with respect to his ability to fly. This is not to say that she attaches the same conceptions to the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman.’ On the contrary, she has very different conceptions of Kent-Super when she thinks of him under a Clark Kent-y conception and when she thinks of him under a Superman-y conception. But she would not use the names to make those conceptions salient, or contribute them to the proposition expressed, because she is not drawing any contrast between Kent-Super based on the
various ways he is conceived. She thinks that these names refer to distinct individuals, rather than to different conceptions of the same individual.

Likewise, if Lois were asked to name a non-avian being incapable of flight, she might utter ¬ (7) in response.

¬ (7) Clark Kent does not fly

Here again, Lois utters ‘Clark Kent’ just to refer to Kent-Super. She would not use ‘Clark Kent’ to call attention to or make salient a Clark Kent-y conception and contrast this with a Superman-y conception, for she has no idea that these are conceptions of the same individual. When she utters ¬ (7), a Superman-y conception of Kent-Super is not on her mind.

Finally, we have the utterance of sentence (1) where the speaker intends to express a trivial self-identity, to say merely that the man is identical to himself. The speaker would use the name ‘Clark Kent’ twice over just refer to the same individual twice over, intending each tokening of the name to have the identical semantic content. The speaker is not attaching different conceptions to each occurrence of the name in order to express an informative identity sentence, as he or she would if she uttered sentence (2) to say that Clark Kent and Superman are the same person or uttered (1) to say, e.g., that the Clark Kent the speaker met at the party is Clark Kent the speaker’s Kindergarten classmate in Smallville.28

In the examples above, speakers use the names just to refer, full stop. Indeed, proper names are most frequently used just to refer. They are used in what I call ‘Millian’ ways. However, the very existence of Frege’s puzzles demonstrates that the Millian claim that merely referring is the only use of proper names is erroneous. In the puzzle cases, speakers clearly use proper names to convey

28 Here, ignore the fact that practically no one would ever utter (1) as an uninformative identity in a genuine conversation. People do not generally go around saying obvious and uninformative things. They do not usually say that anything is identical to itself because the self-identity of any object or person does not need to be pointed out. Sentence (1) qua uninformative identity would most likely be uttered in a philosophical logic class as an example of the principle that everything is identical to itself.
conceptions as well as to refer—they use names in ‘Conception-indicating’ ways. Conceptions figure prominently into the truth conditions of the propositions speakers express in uttering sentences. I shall claim that these conceptions are constituents of the propositions expressed. This is the simplest and most intuitive way to make sense of the intuitive cognitive and true-value differences in the Frege’s puzzle cases. Hence, the TIUT posits that proper names have two uses: to refer only (names used in a Millian way), and to refer and also to convey conceptions (names used in a Conception-indicating way).  

2.2 Definitions: “Dossier Tokens,” “Dossier Types,” “Subjects”

In explaining the character and content of names used in Millian and Conception-indicating ways (in sections 2.3 and 2.4), I use the following terms of art: “dossier tokens,” “dossier types,” and “subjects.” Hence, I will define these terms of art here.

Dossier tokens and their subjects

Graeme Forbes (1990) developed a theory of proper names in which the notion of dossier plays a key role. According to Forbes, “when we receive what we take to be de re information which we have an interest in retaining, our [mental] operating system may create a locus, or dossier, where such information is held; and any further information which we take to be about the same object can be filed along with information about it we already possess… The role of a name is to identify a dossier for a particular object… we use names to “label” dossiers (Forbes, 538).” I adopt this basic characterization of dossiers from Forbes. Dossiers are like encyclopedia entries or files in the mind of an agent: they...
have “subjects”—they contain *de re* information, information about particular persons or objects—and they contain stores of descriptive and perceptual representations associated with and thought by an agent to characterize the subject of the dossier, i.e., what I refer to as *conceptions*. Simply put, each dossier is about a particular individual/object (a subject) and contains information about what the individual/object is thought to be like by the agent (a conception). Lois Lane has one dossier that is about Kent-Super (Kent-Super is its subject) and presents him conceptually in a “Clark Kent-y” way—as a mild-mannered reporter. Her dossier contains the representation, *inter alia*, named ‘Clark Kent’, and it is labeled with the name ‘Clark Kent.’ So this dossier both contains as part of the representation of its subject that the subject bears the name ‘Clark Kent’ and the dossier itself is labeled ‘Clark Kent.’ Lois also has another dossier that is about Kent-Super (it likewise has Kent-Super as its subject) and presents him conceptually in a “Superman-y” way—as a strong superhero. This dossier contains the representation, *inter alia*, named ‘Superman’, and it is labeled with the name ‘Superman.’ So this dossier both contains as part of the representation of its subject that the subject bears the name ‘Superman’ and the dossier itself is labeled ‘Superman.’

On Forbes’ theory, as on the TIUT, the subject of a dossier token is not necessarily the individual that the descriptive and perceptual representations that make up the conception in the dossier best ‘fit.’ In the terminology of Kent Bach (1987, 12) the subject of a dossier is determined relationally, not satisfactionally.30 Whereas the denotation of a definite description is determined satisfactionally because its denotation is just whatever object *satisfies* or best fits it, by contrast the

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30 Bach has characterized the distinction between “relational” and “satisfactional” properties as follows (Bach, 1987, 12): “If all your thoughts about things could only be descriptive, your total conception of the world would be merely qualitative. You would never be related in thought to anything in particular. Thinking of something would never be a case of having it ‘in mind,’ as we say colloquially, or as some philosophers have said, of being ‘en rapport,’ in ‘cognitive contact,’ or ‘epistemically intimate’ with it. But picturesque phrases aside, just what is this special relation? Whatever it is, it is different from that involved in thinking of something under a description. If we can even speak of a relation in the latter case, it is surely not a real (or natural) relation. Since the object of a descriptive thought is determined SATISFACTIONALLY, the fact that the thought is of that object does not require any connection between thought and object. However, the object of a *de re* thought is determined RELATIONALLY. For something to be the object of a *de re* thought, it must stand in a certain kind of relation to that very thought.”
subjecthood of a dossier depends on the existence of an appropriate causal relation between the dossier and its subject that explain the dossier’s coming into being. The subjecthood or ‘aboutness’ of a dossier can be analogized to the aboutness of a photograph. Suppose that President Obama sits for a photograph and quite surprisingly, perhaps because of an odd camera and/or lighting, he strongly resembles Malcolm X. Despite the greater resemblance to Malcolm X, the resulting photograph is nevertheless a photograph of Obama and not of Malcolm X, because there is a causal relation obtaining between Obama and the photograph that does not obtain between Malcolm-X and the photograph. The photo came into being because Obama, and not Malcolm-X, sat for it. The ‘aboutness’ or ‘of-ness’ or subjecthood of photographs is determined relationally rather than satisfactionally, and the same is the case with dossiers.  

Lois Lane’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier has Kent-Super as its subject because she causally interacted with Kent-Super (in his Clark Kent guise) and this resulted in the creation in her mind of the ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier. Kent-Super is also the subject of Lois’ ‘Superman’-labeled dossier for the same reason, i.e., she causally interacted with Kent-Super (in his Superman guise) and this led to the creation of her ‘Superman’-labeled dossier in her mind. Dossiers may also be established in an agent’s mind in the absence of direct causal contact between the agent and the dossier’s subject, as when an agent hears about an individual by name. The subject of the dossier that comes into being would be the individual causally-historically linked to the name the agent heard roughly along the lines of Kripke’s causal-historical picture of reference (Kripke, 1980). (See

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31 The property of dossier subjecthood could very well turn out to be partially satisfactional. It is plausible to claim that successfully referring requires the agent to have some accurate descriptive beliefs about the referent (and be free of certain grossly inaccurate beliefs). In no possible world is Albert Einstein a mountain in Switzerland or an abstract object. We might want to say that a speaker whose ‘Albert Einstein’-labeled dossier was causal-historically connected to the flesh and blood Albert Einstein in the right sort of way, but who had gotten it into his head (because of some sort of bizarre idiosyncratic circumstance) that the name referred to a mountain in Switzerland or an abstract object would fail to refer to Albert Einstein in uttering ‘Albert Einstein.’ In this paper, I remain neutral/agnostic vis-à-vis the issue of the correct theory of reference except insofar as I reject the notion that reference (or dossier subjecthood) might be purely satisfactional, as a descriptivist theory of reference would have it.
Dossier types and their individuation criteria

I have characterized dossier tokens above. The TIUT distinguishes between dossier tokens and dossier types. Dossier types are individuated by their subject and their conception. That is to say, dossier tokens with the same subject and the same (or substantially similar) conception of their subject instantiate the same dossier type. Thus, if two individuals, \(i^1\) and \(i^2\), each have a dossier token with Kent-Super as its subject and containing a “Clark Kent-y” mild-mannered reporter conception, \(i^1\) and \(i^2\) have dossier tokens instantiating the same dossier type.

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32 Kripke’s causal-historical picture of reference runs into a difficulty with so-called empty and fictional names such as ‘Pegasus’ or ‘Santa Claus.’ It is not possible to be in causal contact with Santa Claus, for only existent objects can enter into causal relations. What, according to Kripke, does ‘Santa Claus’ refer to when there no object whatsoever causally linked to the name? If ‘Santa Claus’ and other empty or fictional names did not refer, they would contribute nothing to the propositions expressed by the sentences in which they occur, meaning that sentences containing empty or fictional proper names would fail to express complete propositions, resulting in truth-value gaps. Problematically, obviously true sentences such as ‘Santa Claus is fictional’ would express no proposition whatsoever and lack true-value.

A modified version of Kripke’s causal-historical picture of reference, which would have to be worked out, could explain the reference of empty and fictional names. Although we cannot be causally connected to Santa Claus himself, we can indeed be causally connected to the individual or individuals who invented the Santa Claus legend. The name ‘Santa Claus’ would refer to Santa Claus not because of a causal connection between a dubber and the actual Santa Claus (ignore the fact that Saint Nicholas, on whom the legend was loosely based, was a real person) but because a person uttering the name ‘Santa Claus’ is linked by a causal chain to the person who originated/created the fictional work/myth and his act of creation and transmission of the myth to others (either orally or in writing). Such a theory of reference would explain certain aspects of reference that no Descriptivist theory of reference could. For example, suppose that there were, by sheer coincidence, two legends that use the name ‘Santa Claus’ to talk about a toy-giving man living at the North Pole. Two children, Jan and Joan, only superficially conversant with the details of the legends, associate identical descriptive information with ‘Santa Claus.’ Jan’s use of ‘Santa Claus’ stems from hearing one legend, and Joan’s use stems from hearing the other legend. Both utter: ‘I hope Santa Claus brings me lots of toys this year.’ Intuitively, Jan and Joan are talking about different things. They are expressing their desires vis-à-vis different mythical characters. On a Descriptivist picture of reference, Jan and Joan would express the same proposition in uttering this sentence, for they associate identical descriptions with the name ‘Santa Claus.’ Descriptivism predicts incorrectly that Jan and Joan are speaking about the same mythical character, when they are not. Kripke’s causal-historical picture of reference, suitably modified, might be capable of explaining why Jan and Joan do not refer to the same mythical character: the causal chain of transmission of the two stories they heard lead back to two completely distinct acts of fiction-creation. If the individuals who created the legends set them down in writing, then we can trace Jan and Joan’s uses of ‘Santa Claus’ causally back to distinct literary corpuses.

It remains mysterious what exactly so-called empty names refer to. Some philosophers think that ‘Santa Claus’ fails to refer altogether. But I take that to be highly implausible. The better view is that it refers to a fictional person. In agreement with a growing body of literature on empty and fictional names (see Kroon 2011), I take the thesis that these so-called empty names fail to refer at all to be highly implausible. Salmon (1998) and Soames (2002, 89-95) have argued forcefully against the notion that (most) empty names lack referents. The better view is that fictional/mythical names refer to mythical or fictional characters/objects. ‘Santa Claus does not exist’ means that Santa Claus is not real—that he is fictional or mythical. But Santa Claus is something—he is a mythical/fictional object. The metaphysical status of fictional/mythical characters or objects is mysterious. Are they abstract objects, non-existent concrete particulars, or some other sort of entity? This is a thorny philosophical issue that I cannot treat here.
More about Dossiers

Enlightened agents, as well as unenlightened agents, may have multiple dossiers for the same subject. Suppose that Jimmy Olson is ‘enlightened’—he realizes that Clark Kent is Superman. He may nevertheless maintain two separate dossiers, one labeled ‘Clark Kent’ and one labeled ‘Superman,’ each dossier containing different conceptions of their common subject, Kent-Super. There would be some overlapping representations in his two dossiers reflecting the fact that Olson believes that the dossiers have the same subject. Perhaps the dossiers are ‘linked’ in his cognitive architecture, reflecting the fact that he knows that they have the same subject. The enlightened Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier and his ‘Superman’-labeled dossier cannot match the ‘Clark Kent’-labeled and ‘Superman’-labeled dossiers of the unenlightened Lois Lane perfectly. Olson’s dossiers contain representations reflecting his awareness that the dossiers are about the same subject, whereas Lois’ corresponding dossiers lack that representation. Nevertheless, by having two dossiers, Olson can conceive Kent-Super in either a Clark Kent-y or Superman-y way, thus mirroring Lois’ distinct conceptions of Kent-Super. Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier and his ‘Superman’-labeled dossier are sufficiently similar to Lois’ such that his dossiers are of the same dossier types as hers despite his added knowledge of Clark Kent and Superman’s identity.

The structure of an agent’s dossiers and the representations contained in them—the agent’s “mental architecture”—is dynamic, such that agents regularly restructure the data in their dossiers, split one dossier into two, and merge dossiers. Some of these restructuring changes are permanent, while others involve the creation of temporary dossiers. For example, suppose that instead of two linked dossiers about Kent-Super, one ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier and one ‘Superman’-labeled dossier, the enlightened Jimmy Olson maintained one single dossier on Kent-Super labeled with both the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman.’ Inside of this single dossier are all of the conceptual representations relating to both of Kent-Super’s personas. Olson can temporarily split this unified dossier into two
separate dossiers, one labeled ‘Clark Kent’ and containing a Clark Kent-y conception and the other labeled ‘Superman’ and containing a Superman-y conception. Perhaps this would not entail the actual breaking up of the original, unified, doubly-labeled dossier (the “mother dossier”), but rather the creation of two “temporary” dossiers, into one of which Olson’s operating system loads the Clark Kent-y conceptual material and which is then labeled ‘Clark Kent,’ and the other into which is loaded the Superman-y conceptual material and which is then labeled ‘Superman.’ Presumably, this could be carried out rapidly because the different conceptions are already distinguished within the mother dossier; perhaps the different conceptions are already sorted into different sub-dossiers or they come to be encoded differently in the mother dossier such that they can be recognized as belonging to a Clark Kent-y or a Superman-y conception.

Whether Olson has maintained separate yet linked dossiers for Clark Kent and Superman or has merged the dossiers upon learning that Clark Kent is Superman, we recognize his capacity to reflect upon Kent-Super under different conceptions. As sketched above, there are various possible ways for Olson to organize dossiers in his mental architecture; various ways for him to arrange dossiers so as to contain sub-dossiers into which conceptual representations are organized and catalogued; and various ways for him to structure his or her dossiers or create temporary dossiers. Whether Olson has maintained two separately labeled dossiers or has a unified mother dossier for Kent-Super doubly labeled with ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman,’ he has the capacity to entertain dossiers that are of the same or similar types as those possessed by Lois Lane in her mental architecture. Olson thus has the capacity to mirror the layout of Lois’ mental architecture vis-à-vis Kent-Super within his own dossier organization. He can, as it were, adopt the point of view of Lois and see the world from her perspective by modeling her mental architecture.

The dossier metaphor is a fruitful device for conceptualizing and theorizing about the structure of an agent’s web of belief. However, considering the limited current state of our knowledge of the
workings of the mind, the dossier metaphor will have to remain metaphorical, the science detailing the true workings of the mind’s operating system still being in its infancy. In addition to Forbes and myself, several other philosophers have taken the dossier metaphor to be an illuminating tool for reflecting upon de re belief. The idea of a mental file or dossier has been around for almost fifty years. According to Francois Recanati (2013, 3), who makes extensive use of the notion of mental files in his 1993 and 2013, the notion of mental files or dossiers “was introduced by several philosophers in the late sixties or early seventies, in connection with the referential use of definite descriptions (Grice 1969, 140-44) or with identity statements (Lockwood 1971, 208-11; Strawson 1974, 54-56). It was subsequently exploited by several authors, including Evans (1973, 199; 1982, 276), Bach (1987, 34-37), Devitt (1989, 227-31), Forbes (1989, 1990, 538-45), Crimmins (1992, 87-92)…” and Perry (1980).

I shall qualify a bit the claim I made above that agents take the representations in dossiers to characterize the subject of the dossier. The enlightened Jimmy Olson, who knows that Clark Kent is Superman, can conceive Kent-Super in a Clark Kent-y way or in a Superman-y way just as Lois does. However, there are some differences. Lois’ ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier represents him as weak and indecisive. However, Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier does not represent Clark Kent as genuinely weak and indecisive, since Olson realizes that Kent-Super is in fact strong and decisive and is putting on an act when he is being Clark Kent. Whereas Lois’ dossier represents him as weak and indecisive, Olson’s dossier represents him as weak acting or seemingly weak. Or perhaps his dossier contains the representation weak and indecisive but Olson treats this representation as fictional—with a healthy dose of suspension of disbelief. So Olson is able to conceptualize Clark Kent as weak, despite knowing, at some level, that it is only as if he were weak. Olson, being enlightened, cannot associate certain Clark Kent-y properties with Kent-Super in quite the same way as the unenlightened Lois, yet
there is sufficient similarity between their representations in their respective ‘Clark Kent’-labeled and ‘Superman’-labeled dossiers such that we may say their dossier tokens are of the same dossier type.

Forbes (1990) claims that proper names label dossiers but he is silent on the issue of whether in addition to the name ‘NN’ labeling a dossier, the representation *bears the name ‘NN’* is stored inside the ‘NN’-labeled dossier itself. The TIUT take a clear position on this issue: in addition to the name ‘NN’ labeling a dossier, the dossier also has the representation *bears the name ‘NN’ inside the dossier*, i.e., the representation that the subject of the dossier bears the name ‘NN’ is a part of the conception in the dossier. In some cases, this representation about the name that the subject bears might be the one and only representation in the dossier.

Forbes does not expressly mention the issue of label-less dossiers. The TIUT posits that dossiers sometimes fail to be labeled with proper names. Suppose a man named “Bob” meets a woman at a party who makes a strong impression on him but Bob fails to learn her name. Nevertheless, within Bob’s mental architecture a dossier is created when the encounter takes place for the purpose of collecting and storing *de re* information about that specific woman. Perhaps Bob’s dossier on this woman would lack a label altogether, or a definite description could serve as a temporary label until Bob finds out her name, or Bob’s file could be labeled with a perceptual image of the woman.

A dossier might fail to be labeled with a proper name for another reason. Sometimes agents forget names. A dossier originally labeled with a proper name might lose its label over time. Nevertheless, that dossier might continue to exist, despite the disappearance of the name labeling it. Forgetting a name is not tantamount to forgetting an individual. Agents remember objects and individuals not only by their names but also by the descriptive and perceptual information they have gathered into dossiers over multiple encounters with these objects and individuals.
2.3 Names Used in a ‘Millian’ Way

When employed merely to refer, the TIUT posits that names are used as indexicals that have a two-tiered semantic structure, consisting of the following character and content:

**Character of Millian Name ‘NN’:** The subject of the ‘NN’-labeled dossier token, d, mentally entertained simultaneous with *this very* utterance of ‘NN’ and from whose label the speaker draws ‘NN’

**Content of/Referent of Millian Name ‘NN’:**  
\(< \text{the subject of } d > \text{ the very individual/object itself bearing the name} >\)

By way of clarification, here is what I mean by “the speaker draws ‘NN’ from the dossier label” in the definition of character, *supra*. Let us suppose a dossier token a speaker mentally entertains is labeled ‘NN.’ The speaker can “read” both the contents of the dossier as well as the label of the dossier s/he entertains before his/her mind’s eye. In reading the dossier’s label ‘NN’ and then uttering ‘NN,’ the speaker “draws the name from the dossier’s label.”

To illustrate the content and character of names used in a Millian way, consider for example Lois’ Millian uses of the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ when she utters (8) and ¬ (7).³³

³³ As mentioned above, Lois Lane would use the name ‘Superman’ in a Millian way—just to refer to him, not to call attention to her “Superman-y” way of conceiving him, for as far as she knows she only has one way of conceiving him. She has no reason or ability to contrast her Superman-y conception of Kent-Super with her Clark Kent-y conception of him because she has no idea that these are different conceptions of the same individual.

\[(8) \quad \text{Superman flies}\]

\[\neg (7) \quad \text{Clark Kent does not fly}\]

At the moment she utters ¬ (7), Lois mentally entertains her ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier—a dossier that has Kent-Super as its subject with a Clark Kent-y conception. She draws the name ‘Clark Kent’ from of the dossier’s label, i.e., she reads the name on the label and utters it. By virtue of the Millian character, the content of her utterance is the subject of the dossier token from which she drew the name—Kent-Super. Kent-Super, the content of ‘Clark Kent’ in the context, is also the referent of
‘Clark Kent.’ When she utters (8), Lois entertains her ‘Superman’-labeled dossier—a dossier that has Kent-Super as its subject with a Superman-y conception. She draws the name ‘Superman’ from the dossier’s label, i.e., she reads the name on the label and utters it. By virtue of the Millian character, the content of her utterance is the subject of the dossier token from which she drew the name—Kent-Super. Kent-Super, the content of ‘Superman’ in the context, is also the referent of ‘Superman.’

Both of her utterances of the names ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ refer to Kent-Super (whether Lois realizes it or not) because in both cases the Millian character maps the utterances to Kent-Super. That is, Kent-Super is the subject of both of the dossiers entertained and it is from these dossiers’ labels that Lois draws the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman.’

2.4 Names Used in a ‘Conception-Indicating’ Way

When used in a ‘Conception-indicating’ way, a name functions as an indexical that contributes both the referent and a conception of it to the proposition. Unlike names used in a Millian way, which have a two-tiered semantics (character and content/referent), names used in a Conception-indicating way have a three-tiered semantics.

Character of Conception-indicating Name ‘NN’: The subject individuating [[the dossier type, D, instantiated by the ‘NN’-labeled dossier token, d, entertained simultaneous with this very utterance ‘NN’ and from whose label the speaker draws ‘NN’]]

Content of Conception-indicating Name ‘NN’: The subject individuating D a definite description

denotes

Referent of ‘NN’: < The subject individuating D > the very individual or object itself bearing the name
The boldfaced double brackets in the statement of character is the convention I use to indicate that ‘the subject individuating’ does not operate on the language contained within the double brackets at the level of character. ‘The subject individuating’ contributes itself, \textit{qua} linguistic entity, to content, as the upper leftmost arrow indicates. ‘D’, a name for the dossier type denoted by the definite description inside the double boldfaced brackets, is also contributed to content, as the upper rightmost arrow indicates. D is the dossier type instantiated by the dossier token, d, that the speaker mentally entertains when uttering the name and from whose label s/he draws the name (see section 2.3, second paragraph, \textit{supra}, for meaning of “draws a name”).

The \textit{content} of ‘NN’ in the context is given by the definite description ‘The subject individuating D.’ The \textit{referent} of ‘NN’ in the context is the denotation of this definite description, i.e., the subject by which D is individuated.

What then would be the proposition expressed by sentence (2)? For the sake of convenience, let us henceforth refer to the proposition expressed by sentence (2) as “PROP-2.” Consider sentence (2) as uttered by the enlightened Jimmy Olson when he is trying to convince Lois Lane that PROP-2, i.e., that Clark Kent and Superman are the same person.

(2) Clark Kent is Superman

Olson would use ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in a Conception-indicating way in (2), for he wants to distinguish between different conceptions of Kent-Super by using different names for Kent-Super. He aims for his conceptions of Kent-Super, one conception in a dossier he labels ‘Clark Kent’ and one conception in a dossier he labels ‘Superman,’ as much as possible to resemble Lois’ Clark Kent-y and Superman-y conceptions of Kent-Super in her respective separate ‘Clark Kent’-labeled and ‘Superman’-labeled dossiers. Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier presents its subject, Kent-Super, under a Clark Kent-y mild-mannered reporter conception. He mentally entertains the dossier, sees that
it is labeled ‘Clark Kent’ and draws the name from the label (he utters ‘Clark Kent’). By virtue of the Conception-indicating character, the content of ‘Clark Kent’ in the context is given by the definite description:

The subject individuating $D^{CK}$

Here, $D^{CK}$ is the dossier type instantiated by Olson’s dossier token that has Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception, and from whose label he draws ‘Clark Kent.’

Olson’s ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token presents its subject, Kent-Super, under a Superman-y conception. He mentally entertains the dossier, sees that it is labeled ‘Superman’ and draws the name from the label (he utters ‘Superman’). By virtue of the Conception-indicating character, the content of ‘Superman’ in the context is given by the definite description:

The subject individuating $D^{SM}$

Here, $D^{SM}$ is the dossier type instantiated by the Olson’s dossier token that has Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception, and from whose label he draws ‘Superman.’

The content of the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are different in this context, since their contents are given by different definite descriptions containing expressions referring to different dossier types. Nevertheless, the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ refer to the same individual, Kent-Super, because Kent-Super is the individual denoted by both definite descriptions. Both referent and conception are “in” content, albeit in an indirect way: by virtue of being the individuation criteria of the dossier type referenced by the definite description giving the content of each name in the context. So with Olson’s utterance of ‘Superman,’ both Kent-Super and a Superman-y conception are in content by virtue of the fact that dossier type $D^{SM}$ is individuated both by Kent-Super and by a Superman-y conception. And with Olson’s utterance of ‘Clark Kent,’ both
Kent-Super and a Clark Kent-y conception are in content by virtue of the fact that $D^{CK}$ is individuated both by Kent-Super and a Clark Kent-y conception.

N.B.: Although the TIUT claims that the content of these proper names is each given by a definite description, the TIUT is not a Descriptivist theory or proper names and is hence not vulnerable to Kripke’s arguments against Descriptivism. While it is true that the contents of proper names are given by definite descriptions, importantly the names have these descriptive contents only relative to a particular use by a speaker in a particular conversational context. These definite descriptions do not give the meanings of these names in any wider sense. The cross-speaker eternal meanings of these names are their characters, not their contents in a particular context, given that proper names are used as indexicals.

Since these definite descriptions give the content of the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in the context, we can freely substitute these definite descriptions at the places where the names occur in (2) and the resulting sentence (2)$^\dagger$ will express the same proposition as (2).

(2)$^\dagger$ The subject individuating $D^{CK}$ is the subject individuating $D^{SM}$

Both (2) and (2)$^\dagger$ express the same proposition, PROP-2. However, unlike (2), (2)$^\dagger$ opens a window onto the structure of PROP-2 that (2) does not, revealing why (2) is informative. (2)$^\dagger$ makes it evident on its face that PROP-2 is the proposition that there are two dossier types, $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$, individuated by the same subject but by different conceptions. PROP-2 is not the uninformative and obvious proposition that Kent-Super is Kent-Super, as Millians maintain.

Furthermore, since ‘$D^{CK}$’ means the same thing as ‘the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception,’ and ‘$D^{SM}$’ means the same thing as ‘the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception,’ we can substitute these descriptions at the places where the names of these dossier types occur in (2), and the resulting
sentence, (2)\^\^, will express the same proposition as (2) and (2)^\dagger, PROP-2.

\[\text{PROP-2}\]

The subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception is the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception.

(2)\^\^ opens an even more detailed window onto the nature of PROP-2 than (2)^\dagger. (2)\^\^ reveals that PROP-2 is the proposition that there are two dossier types, one individuated by a Clark Kent-y conception and the other by a Superman-y conception, both of which are individuated by the same subject, Kent-Super.

2.5 Names are Rigid Designators on the TIUT

It should be uncontroversial that proper names are rigid designators when used in a Millian way, since it is uncontroversial that names are rigid designators according to all Millian theories. In fact, the revival of Millianism in the 1970’s was to a great extent a reaction to Kripke’s modal argument by which he convinced the vast majority of philosophers that names are rigid designators.

Proper names are also rigid when used in a Conception-indicating way. Here is why. It is \textit{analytic} that the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark-Kent-y conception (i.e., dossier type $D^{CK}$) is Kent-Super. And it is likewise analytic that the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception (i.e., dossier type $D^{SM}$) is Kent-Super. These dossier types are \textit{individuated} by Kent-Super as their subject, meaning that these dossier types are \textit{defined} by having Kent-Super as their subject. They have their subjects \textit{essentially}. If, \textit{per impossible}, the subject individuating these dossier types were not Kent-Super in some possible world, we would not have \textit{these} dossier types. In every possible world, dossier types $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$ are individuated by the same subject—Kent-Super. \textbf{Hence, PROP-2}—which, according to the TIUT, just is the proposition that these dossier types, $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$,
are individuated by the same subject, Kent-Super—is true in every possible world.

Of course, not all tokenings of ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are drawn from dossiers instantiating dossier types individuated by Kent-Super as subject.\(^{34}\) A speaker might draw ‘Superman’ from a dossier token whose subject is Kent-Super but draw ‘Clark Kent’ from a dossier token whose subject is some person named ‘Clark Kent’ other than Kent-Super, i.e., a namesake, in which case ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ would express a false proposition. Hence, not every utterance of ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ will express a true proposition, let alone one that is true in every possible world. However, given that Lois or Olson (or whoever) actually draws the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ from dossier tokens that have Kent-Super as subject, dossier types individuated by Kent-Super are loaded into content. In every possible world, these dossier types (the ones actually instantiated by the dossier tokens of actual world speakers and loaded into content) are individuated by the same individual—Kent-Super. Hence, Lois’ or Olson’s utterance of ‘Clark Kent is Superman,’ given that the dossiers tokens from which they draw the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ actually instantiate dossier types individuated by Kent-Super as subject, expresses a proposition true in every possible world.

2.6 Solution to Frege’s Puzzle about Informative Identity Sentences

Suppose Jimmy Olson utters (2) to say something informative, e.g., to disabuse Lois Lane of her ignorance that Clark Kent is Superman, as illustrated in section 2.4 above. According to the TIUT, he would use the names in sentence (2) in a Conception-indicating way and, as I claimed in section 2.4 supra, and he would express PROP-2, which could also be expressed by either sentence (2)\(^{\dagger}\) or (2)\(^{\dagger\dagger}\).

\[ (2)^{\dagger} \quad \text{The subject individuating } D^{CK} \text{ is the subject individuating } D^{SM} \]

\[^{34}\]
The subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception is the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception.

By contrast, were Olson to utter (1) to express an uninformative identity, tokening the name ‘Clark Kent’ in Millian way twice over (i.e., merely referring twice to Kent-Super)—he would express PROP-1, or the singular proposition that Kent-Super is Kent-Super.\(^{35}\) PROP-1 could also be expressed by sentence (1)\(^{†}\).

\[(1)^{†} \quad \text{Kent-Super is Kent-Super}\]

Comparing sentence (1)\(^{†}\) with (2)\(^{††}\), it is manifest that (1) and (2) express different propositions. (1)\(^{†}\) expresses the proposition that Kent-Super is identical to Kent-Super; no dossier types, subjects, or conceptions are mentioned in (1)\(^{†}\). By contrast, it is evident on the face of sentence (2)\(^{††}\) that it expresses a completely different proposition: the proposition that there are two dossier types, one individuated by a Clark Kent-y conception and the other by a Superman-y conception, that are individuated by the same subject, Kent-Super. The difference in cognitive value between (1) and (2) is therefore explained by their expressing different propositions.

Here’s (a somewhat metaphorical description of) how Olson’s utterance of (2) manages to be informative to Lois. Upon hearing Olson utter (2), Lois Lane will inwardly inspect her own dossiers that bear the labels ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ and she will suppose that Olson is trying to communicate to her that these dossier tokens, the ones she has in her mental architecture labeled with those names, have the same subject. If she is skeptical that the mild-mannered guy she works with named ‘Clark Kent’ could really be bold and confident Superman, the superhero, she might check to make sure that the dossier types that Olson is referring to are the same as those instantiated by her

\(^{35}\) Here, it helps to imagine that Olson is a philosopher or logician when we consider the possibility that Olson would utter an uninformative identity. Ordinarily, people never utter uninformative identities. They do not state the obvious.
'Clark Kent’- and ‘Superman’-labeled tokens. After all, Olson could be referring to some other person named ‘Clark Kent,’ a namesake, when he utters ‘Clark Kent’ in (2). To check whether she has the right Clark Kent, she will ask Olson about the conceptions in the dossiers from which he drew the names. She might ask him, e.g., “When you said ‘Clark Kent,’ did you mean the Clark Kent I work with, the reporter? You are claiming that that guy is Superman the Superhero?” Olson may then double-check to ensure that he is in fact referring to that Clark Kent (via inspecting the dossier from which he drew ‘Clark Kent,’ making sure that this dossier corresponds conceptually to Lois’ ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier), and then confirm to Lois that he is referring to that Clark Kent. If Lois believes that Olson intends to speak the truth (and not pulling her leg) and is a reliable source of information, she will come to accept that her own ‘Clark Kent’- and ‘Superman’-labeled dossiers have the same subject, just as Olson’s do, and thereby implicitly accept (as a matter of pure logic) that the dossier types her tokens instantiate are individuated by the same subject. Hence, she will have come to believe PROP-2, that Clark Kent is Superman (since the proposition that Clark Kent is Superman just is the proposition that these dossier types are individuated by the same subject).

The TIUT solves the identity sentences puzzle where Millianism and Descriptivism each give us half solutions. Millianism gets the modal profile issue right (sentence (1) and (2) express propositions with the same modal profile) but clashes with the intuition that sentences (1) and (2) express different propositions and it fails to explain the difference in their cognitive value. Descriptivism explains the difference in cognitive value but has the unwanted consequence that (1) and (2) have different modal profiles. Furthermore, Descriptivism implausibly posits that names have fixed cross-speaker descriptive meanings, whereas the TIUT does not (on the TIUT the meaning of names is their character, since names are indexicals). The TIUT gives us everything we seek from our theory: cognitive value differences between uninformative and informative identity sentences that are

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36 At least on a non-rigidified Descriptivism (and the weight of Kripke’s arguments, taken together, show rigidified Descriptivism to be highly implausible).
explained by their expressing different propositions with the same modal profile. The TIUT explains how ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ can be devoid of descriptive content, both rigidly refer to Kent-Super, and at the same time differ in semantic content, contributing different conceptions to the proposition expressed (by way of contributing different dossier types, individuated by different conceptions, to the definite descriptions giving the contents of ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in the context.)

2.7 Solution to Frege’s Puzzle about Propositional Attitude Ascriptions

According to the TIUT, there are two sorts of propositional attitude ascriptions: those in which Millian names occur within the scope of the ‘that’-clause, and those in which Conception-indicating names occur in the scope of the ‘that’-clause. In the former case, we have ‘Millian Ascriptions.’ A Millian ascription relates the ascribee to a singular proposition and is silent about how either the ascriber or the ascribee conceives the referent(s) of the name(s) in the ‘that’-clause. In the latter case, we have ‘Conception-indicating Ascriptions.’ A Conception-indicating ascription relates the ascribee to a singular proposition and, additionally, conveys the way in which the ascribee conceives the referent of the proper name inside the ‘that’-clause. Conception-indicating ascriptions express a more finely-grained picture of the proposition the agent believes than Millian ascriptions.

I do not believe there could be any non-arbitrary answer to the question: which sort of ascription really ascribes belief? On the contrary, I think that both Conception-indicating and Millian ascriptions are used to ascribe belief, the salient difference between them being the level of how fine-grained they are. Millian ascriptions are coarser-grained than Conception-indicating ascriptions because they merely indicate the singular propositions the ascribee believes without indicating the ascribee’s conception of the name’s referent. Conception-indicating ascriptions are finer-grained because they also convey the speaker’s conception of the referent of the proper name(s) inside the
‘that’-clause.

Whether a particular propositional attitude ascription is a Millian or Conception-indicating ascription is a function of the speaker’s *expressive intent* in uttering the ascription sentence (although, as I elaborate below in section 2.7.2 infra, there are important *pragmatic* constraints on what the speaker can rationally intend to communicate to his audience *via* his or her utterance given what the audience is likely to take the utterance to mean in the context). That is to say, propositional attitude ascriptions are semantically ambiguous between Millian and Conception-indicating readings, and to determine whether a particular propositional attitude ascription is due a Millian or Conception-indicating reading, the audience must ascertain the proposition the speaker intended to convey to his/her audience (although, again, context will generally provide highly reliable clues to the speaker’s expressive intent).

### 2.7.1 Conception-Indicating Ascriptions

Consider propositional attitude ascription sentence (4), in which a speaker, Olson, uses the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in a Conception-indicating way.

(4) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman

According to the TIUT, sentence (4), if uttered by Olson (supposing he uttered the sentence knowing it to express a falsehood), would express the false proposition that would be expressed by (4)†:

(4)† Lois believes that the subject individuating $D^{CK}$ is the subject individuating $D^{SM}$

where $D^{CK}$ is the dossier type instantiated by Olson’s dossier token that has Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception and from whose label he draws ‘Clark Kent,’ and $D^{SM}$ is the dossier type instantiated by the Olson’s dossier token that has Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception
and from whose label Olson draws ‘Superman.’

Likewise, suppose that Olson used the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in a Conception-indicating way in ascription sentences (5) and (6).

(5) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies
(6) Lois Lane believes that Superman flies

In uttering sentence (5), Olson would express the false proposition that would be expressed by (5)†, and in uttering (6) he would express the true proposition that would be expressed by (6)†.

(5)† Lois believes that the subject individuating DCK flies
(6)† Lois believes that the subject individuating DSM flies

4-s, 5-s, and 6-s, below, schematize the semantics (i.e., state the truth conditions) of the propositions Olson expresses by uttering sentence (4)-(6) (indicated de re vis-à-vis Kent-Super):

4-s Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token d1 instantiating the same dossier type, DCK, as instantiated by Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token d2 from whose label Olson draws the name ‘Clark Kent,’ and Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token d3 instantiating the same dossier type, DSM, as instantiated by the Olson’s ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token d4 from whose label Olson draws the name ‘Superman,’ and Believes (Lois, <the subject of d1, the subject of d3>, identity >)

5-s Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token d1 instantiating the same dossier type, DCK, as instantiated by Olson’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token d2 from whose label Olson draws the name ‘Clark Kent,’ and Believes (Lois, <the subject of d1, flies>)

6-s Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token d3 instantiating the same dossier type, DSM, as instantiated by Olson’s ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token d4 from whose label Olson draws the name ‘Superman,’ and Believes (Lois, <the subject of d3, flies>)

The above schematization of the semantics of the proposition expressed by sentence (4) makes plain

37 Of course, Olson would not ordinarily utter either sentence (4) or (5), unless he intends to lie or mislead, because he realizes that both are false. Nevertheless, I am supposing here that Olson utters (4) and (5) in order to examine their semantics. By examining the semantics of the true (3) and contrasting it with the semantics of false (4), and by examining the semantics of false (5) and contrasting it with the semantics of the true (6), I aim to show that the Millians’ claim that (3) expresses the same proposition as (4), and (5) the same proposition as (6), is erroneous.
why (4) would express a false proposition. Lois does not realize that her two dossiers tokens, \( d^1 \) and \( d^3 \), have the same subject. In fact, she disbelieves that they have same subject. Hence, she believes (erroneously) that the dossier types, \( D^{CK} \) and \( D^{SM} \), instantiated by her tokens, \( d^1 \) and \( d^3 \), are individuated by different subjects.

The above schematization of the semantics of (5) and (6) reveal that they genuinely differ in truth-value. (5) expresses a false proposition and (6) a true proposition. (5) and (6) do not merely appear differ in truth-value as Millians maintain. Whereas Lois does not believe that the subject of her dossier \( d^1 \) flies, she does believe that the subject of her dossier \( d^3 \) flies. Hence, (5) expresses the false proposition that Lois believes that the subject individuating dossier type \( D^{CK} \), which is the dossier type instantiated by her dossier tokens \( d^1 \), flies. And (6) expresses the true proposition that Lois believes that the subject individuating dossier type \( D^{SM} \), which is the dossier type instantiated by her dossier tokens \( d^3 \), flies.

In ascribing beliefs to Lois, Olson has in his mind a model of Lois’ mental architecture. He aims to have a ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token and a ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token that are of the same dossier types as Lois’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled and ‘Superman’-labeled dossier tokens respectively. Olson ascribes beliefs to Lois by referencing his own dossier tokens qua tokens of the same types as Lois’s tokens. Below is a (metaphorical) description of the nature of Olson’s ascription sentence (5n)

\[ (5n) \quad \text{Lois Lane does not believe that Clark Kent flies} \]

from Olson’s first person perspective:

There is a dossier token in Lois’ mental architecture which is an instance of the dossier type of which this dossier token is a token [Olson makes his own ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token salient by drawing the name ‘Clark Kent’ from that dossier token’s label]; Lois does NOT believe that the subject of her dossier token, instantiating the same type as the token from whose label I am drawing the name ‘Clark Kent,’ flies.
Below is a (metaphorical) description of the nature of Olson’s ascription sentence (6), from Olson’s
first person perspective:

There is a dossier token in Lois’ mental architecture which is an instance of the dossier type of
which this dossier token is a token [Olson makes his own ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token
salient by drawing the name ‘Superman’ from that dossier token’s label]; Lois believes that the
subject of her dossier token, instantiating the same dossier type as the token from whose label I
am drawing the name ‘Superman,’ flies.

On the TIUT, (3)-(4) and (5)-(6) express different propositions with different truth-values.
Sentence (3) expresses the trivial proposition that Lois believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super due to
the Millian use of both of the proper names in the ‘that’-clause of (3). A rational Lois Lane could
never disbelieve the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause of (3). But the semantics of (4), as I
have schematized them above, make clear, the ‘that’-clause of (4) refers to a different proposition from
that of (3). Lois Lane can rationally disbelieve the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause in (4).
She may rationally do so because she fails to realize that her two dossier tokens, d₁ and d₃, have the
same subject. Furthermore, she can rationally disbelieve the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-
clause in (5) and believe the proposition referred to by ‘that’-clause in (6), because she is ignorant of
the fact that her dossier tokens d₁ and d₃ have the same subject. She may rationally, and without
inconsistency, believe that the subject of d₁ does not fly and believe that the subject of d₃ does fly.

One final point here. The reader may wonder why the Conception-indicating character appeals
to dossier types, rather than just to dossier tokens. To see why types, rather than tokens, are necessary,
consider the following example. Suppose a man named ‘Tony’ knows a lot about Lois Lane, but Lois
has never heard about Tony or met him and does not know him from Adam. Now suppose Tony were
to utter propositional attitude ascription ¬ (5)

\[ \neg (5) \quad \text{Lois Lane disbelieves that Clark Kent flies} \]
and suppose further that the content of ‘Clark Kent’ were given by the definite description the subject of dossier token \(d^{CK,Tony}\), where \(d^{CK,Tony}\) is a dossier token in Tony’s head that has Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception. Sentence \(\neg (5)\), as uttered by Tony, would therefore express the same proposition as the sentence ‘Lois Lane disbelieves the subject of dossier token \(d^{CK,Tony}\) flies.’ This sentence makes a claim about Lois’ belief about the properties of a particular dossier token in Tony’s head, \(d^{CK,Tony}\). The crux of the difficulty is that Lois’ belief that Clark Kent does not fly is not a belief about Tony’s dossier token \(d^{CK,Tony}\), and Lois Lane does not even know who Tony is, so she can hardly entertain beliefs about his dossier tokens. But this problem is avoided by the TIUT because the Conception-indicating character refers to dossier types: Lois Lane does indeed have beliefs about dossier types in virtue of having beliefs about her own dossier tokens, which instantiate dossier types. Because Tony can have a dossier token of the same type as Lois’ token, he can “point to” his token as an instance of the type and say that Lois has a belief about the type by virtue of her having a belief about a token of that type in her head. The truth-value of the proposition Tony expresses does not depend in any way on whether Lois has any beliefs about Tony’s dossier tokens. It depends only on her having tokens of the same type as his tokens and having beliefs about her own tokens. She need not be familiar with Tony or be capable or entertaining thought about his dossier tokens in order for Tony to truly ascribe beliefs to Lois with respect to Clark Kent’s flying ability (or lack thereof).

To summarize: if the Conception-indicating character were phrased in terms of tokens rather than types, propositional attitude ascriptions would be overly “autobiographical,” as it were: a speaker, such as Tony, in ascribing belief to an ascribee such as Lois Lane, would be making a claim about his own dossier tokens—asserting that Lois has beliefs about his tokens. But when Tony ascribes belief to Lois about whether she thinks Clark Kent flies, he is not talking about himself or his dossier tokens nor asserting that Lois has any beliefs about his tokens.
2.7.2 Millian Ascriptions

Some propositional attitude ascriptions contain Millian names and such ascriptions report belief between agents and singular propositions. If, when someone uttered sentence (3),

(3) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Clark Kent

s/he were to use the name ‘Clark Kent’ in a Millian way (for both occurrences in (3)), s/he would express the proposition that Lois believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. For the content of each occurrence of ‘Clark Kent’ would, according to the Millian character, be Kent-Super himself.

If, when someone uttered sentence (6), s/he were to use the name ‘Superman’ in a Millian way, s/he would express a true proposition.

(6) Lois Lane believes that Superman flies

Lois believes the singular proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause of (6)—that Kent-Super flies, for she believes Kent-Super that he flies when she thinks of him under a Superman-y conception. So (6) is true when ‘Superman’ is used in it in a Millian way. As I argued in section 2.7.1 supra, (6) would also be true if the speaker used the name ‘Superman’ in (6) in a Conception-indicating way, except the proposition expressed would be different, as set out in section 2.7.1 (it would be a finer-grained ascription, indicating the ascribee’s Superman-y conception of Kent-Super.)

In the case of sentence (5), however, truth-value depends crucially on whether the ascriber uses the name ‘Clark Kent’ in a Millian or Conception-indicating way.

(5) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent flies

As I argued in section 2.7.1, consistent with intuitions about the matter, (5) is false when ‘Clark Kent’ is used in a Conception-indicating way to say that Lois Lane believes that Kent-Super flies when she
conceives him in a Clark Kent-y way. When she conceives Kent-Super in a Clark Kent-y way, she very much is convinced that he cannot fly. But suppose that someone uttered sentence (5) intending to use the name ‘Clark Kent’ in a Millian way, just to refer Kent-Super. The content of ‘Clark Kent’ would be Kent-Super, the man himself. Hence, the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause of the ascription, ‘that Clark Kent flies,’ would be the singular proposition \textit{that Kent-Super flies}. Lois does in fact believe this singular proposition (for she believes it when she conceives Kent-Super as Superman), so (5) is \textit{true} when ‘Clark Kent’ is used in a Millian way, even though it is false when used in Conception-indicating way.

It might seem quite surprising that I would maintain that (5) could be used to express a true proposition, since we tend to have the strong intuition that (5) is \textit{false}, period. However, I think this intuition is unreliable. We have this intuition because neither we, nor any enlightened speaker (such as Olson), would ever utter (5) \textit{qua} Millian ascription because of the fact that we know about Lois’ confusion about the identity of Clark Kent and Superman. An utterance of (5) as a Millian ascription (to express the proposition that Lois believes that Kent-Super flies) would be highly misleading to our target audience. Upon hearing a speaker uttering (5), an audience would presume that the speaker is saying that Lois Lane believes that Kent-Super can fly when she thinks of him under a Clark Kent-y conception, as a mild-mannered reporter (i.e., the false proposition that (5) would express were it a Conception-indicating ascription). However, before we judge all utterances of (5) to express a false proposition \textit{full stop}, we must consider what a speaker knows about Lois Lane’s confusion and what sort of expressive intent he has. Consider a scenario in which an enlightened speaker—call him “Kurt”—is unaware that Lois Lane, or anyone in Metropolis, is unenlightened about the identity of Clark Kent and Superman. Kurt knows that ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are both names for Kent-Super, but he does not realize that different conceptions are commonly associated with the names by people in Metropolis. Kurt might overhear Lois Lane utter “Superman sure can fly fast” and utter
sentence (5) merely to report that Lois Lane believes of Kent-Super, de re, that he can fly, without concern for (or knowledge of) the different ways in which she conceives him. To determine whether what Kurt said is true or false when uttering (5), I believe one must ask the following questions: what proposition did Kurt intend to express with his utterance, and given what he knew (or failed to know) about his audience, was it reasonable for him to utter (5) to communicate that proposition? Given that Kurt is unaware of Lois’ unenlightened state and he intended to use ‘Clark Kent’ just to refer to Kent-Super, it was reasonable for him to utter (5) to express the de re proposition that Lois believes that Kent-Super flies. Kurt has expressed, via uttering (5), the true proposition that Lois Lane believes the singular proposition that Kent-Super flies. However, his utterance is pragmatically deficient as it is highly misleading given Lois’ confused state of mind and given the audience he is addressing who knows about her confusion. That Kurt has not spoken falsely, strictly speaking, is evidenced by the fact that ordinary enlightened speakers aware of Kurt’s ignorance of Lois’ confused state probably would not correct Kurt by uttering merely ‘that is false; she does not believe he can fly.’ Realizing that Kurt intends to say something true but is saying it in a misleading way, they would instead correct him by saying something like: ‘Well Kurt, she does believe the guy can fly, but not when she thinks of him as Clark Kent, but only when she thinks of him as Superman, since she does not realize Clark Kent and is Superman.’ In other words, Kurt’s audience can understand Kurt’s utterance as a (technically true) Millian ascription if they are able to put themselves into Kurt’s shoes and interpret his utterance from his epistemic perspective.

We may have difficulty interpreting ‘Clark Kent’ as a Millian name—one used just to refer to Kent-Super and not to pick out Kent-Super under a mild-mannered reporter conception—precisely because it is so commonly used as a Conception-indicating name in the Superman story. The names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ have each come to mean a certain individual under a certain conception almost by convention. ‘Clark Kent’ has come to mean Kent-Super dressed as an ordinary civilian and
acting a like a regular weak earthling. ‘Superman’ has come to mean Kent-Super dressed in a super-hero costume and acting like a superhero. Each name is so strongly associated with a particular conception that the ability to use these names without immediately calling to mind the intimately associated conceptions has become weakened. Therefore, we have difficulty seeing that either of those names could be used in a strictly Millian way, i.e., just to refer to Kent-Super, they guy himself, without calling to mind a way of conceiving him. But not every Frege’s puzzle case involves conceptions conventionally associated with proper names. Let us consider a Frege’s puzzle case in which we do not strongly conventionally associate certain conceptions with a pair of co-referential proper names, where the conceptions are instead associated with the names only in the confines of a particular idiosyncratic conversational context. Suppose that you are standing on the street with your friend, Bob. Barack Obama walks by, and Bob utters: “Wow, I haven’t seen Barry in ages. He sure is looking handsome.” Later that day, you report to me: “Bob thinks Obama is looking handsome.” This propositional attitude ascription seems clearly true. Now, suppose you find out the following day that Bob is a childhood friend of Barack Obama, but he only knew him by the name “Barry” as a child. Bob is unaware that Barry, his childhood friend, is Barack Obama, the president of the United States. Bob knows that the president of the US is named “Barack Obama” and knows a lot about his policies but somehow does not know what Obama looks like. When Obama walked by, Bob only recognized him as his childhood friend, Barry, not as the president of the US, Barack Obama. Query: now that you have found out about Bob’s confusion, do you deem the propositional attitude ascription you uttered the previous day, “Bob thinks Obama is handsome,” to have been true or false? My intuition here is that the ascription was true and remains so despite what you learn about Bob’s idiosyncratic confused state and despite the fact that Bob might dissent from the sentence “Obama is handsome,” since Bob has never seen Obama in the guise of president of the US. When you uttered the ascription sentence, you intended merely to refer to Obama and describe Bob’s opinion of the way he looks. You
were not taking into consideration Bob’s conception or conceptions of Obama. It seems fine to report Bob’s beliefs about how Obama looks now using the name “Obama”, even though Bob would not use this name, because Bob’s two conceptions of the man, one he associated with the name ‘Barry’ and the other with the name ‘Obama’, are idiosyncratic to Bob and have not become conventionalized amongst a wide swath of the language community.

In sum, I think the intuition that sentence (5) expresses a false proposition full stop, irrespective of the speaker’s expressive intentions in uttering the name or what the speaker knew or failed to know about conceptions associated with the name, is erroneous, and it arises from the peculiarity of the Kent/Superman case, i.e., the fact that conceptions have become strongly conventionally associated with the names. In Frege’s puzzle cases like the Barry/Obama case, where different conceptions are associated with the names ‘Barry’ and ‘Obama’ only within the confines of a particular conversational context, we are more inclined to accept that the name ‘Obama’ could be used in a Millian way just to refer to the man himself, and would not automatically evoke any particular conception of the man.

Both Millian and Conception-indicating readings of (5) are possible. On the Millian reading, the sentence is true. On the Conception-indicating reading it is false. The speaker’s expressive intent is the main factor determining whether the tokening of a name is owed a Millian or Conception-indicating reading. One might then wonder therefore whether a speaker could token the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ side by side inside the ‘that’-clause of a propositional attitude ascription intending a Millian reading of both names. For example, could an ascriber use the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in a Millian way inside the ‘that’-clause of ascription sentence (4) to express the true but trivial proposition that Lois believes PROP-1, that Kent-Super is Kent-Super?

(4) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman

I do not believe so. What I shall call the ‘Meaning Consistency Principle,’ a pragmatic principle of
conversation that could perhaps be construed as a corollary of Grice’s Maxim of Manner (i.e., be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can, avoid obscurity and ambiguity), explains why no ascriber would use the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ in (4) in a Millian way to express the trivial (and true) proposition that Lois Lane believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super.

**Meaning Consistency:** Multiple occurrences of the same syntactic string in a sentence generally entail that the speaker meant the same thing by each occurrence.\(^{38}\) Occurrences of different syntactic strings entail a difference in meaning.

When any audience hears an utterance of (4), it presumes, according the Meaning Consistency Principle, that the expressions ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ are non-synonymous. After all, the speaker surely must have a reason for using two different names. The audience would never understand the names to be used in a Millian way, because this would involve using the names synonymously (since each of their semantic contents would be the same—Kent-Super himself and nothing more). Every rational speaker would realize that his audience would not read the names as Millian names, and hence s/he would understand that his or her audience would misunderstand him if he uttered (4) with the intention to use both the names in a Millian way to say that Lois Lane believes the trivial proposition that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. Perhaps I would go as far as to say that no rational ascriber *could* utter (4) to express this proposition, knowing that the proposition would be universally misunderstood. For what a speaker may express via an utterance is not merely a function of the expressive intent of the speaker, but in addition, it is constrained by what the speaker can reasonably expect his audience to take it to mean.\(^{39}\) And pragmatic principles of conversation, such as

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\(^{38}\) By *generally*, I mean that there are exceptions when the conversational context makes it clear that the speaker means different things by the same expression (see Bill/Liz example, section 2.8 *infra*), or where the grammar of the sentence entails a difference in meaning (e.g., in the sentence “Rose in popularity beginning in high school” we infer from the grammar that the two occurrences of “rose” must have different meanings).

\(^{39}\) It is also unlikely that the audience would read the sentence as a Millian ascription (to say that Lois Lane believes that Kent-Super is self-identical) simply because practically no one except a logician or a philosopher would ever discuss self-identity or any agent’s beliefs about self-identity.
the meaning consistency principle, control here. Hence, whether a proper name is due a Millian or Conception-indicating reading is a function of speaker expressive intent constrained by pragmatic principles that guide speakers in their choice of words. Without doing violence to the language, speakers cannot intend to mean something by their words when they know that pragmatic guiding principles of language interpretation will prevent their message from getting across.40

2.8 Solution to the Problem of Rational Inconsistent Belief

In uttering (8) and ¬(7), Lois Lane would express and believe inconsistent singular propositions, assuming that she uses the names in a Millian way in her utterances.

(8) Superman flies

¬(7) Clark Kent does not fly

As discussed in sections 1.2 and 2.1, she would use the names in a Millian way since she does not realize that she has two different conceptions of the one Kent-Super, and so she would have no reason to refer to those conceptions or make them salient in uttering (8) and ¬(7) by using names in a Conception-indicating way. Sentences (8) and ¬(7), where the names are used in a Millian way, would express the inconsistent singular propositions that Kent-Super flies and that it is not the case that Kent-Super flies.

As described above in section 1.2, the problem of rational inconsistent belief challenges us to explain why Lois Lane is not to be charged with irrationality because of her having inconsistent

40 I do not mean to suggest that it would be impossible to create an artificial language that did not follow the Meaning Consistency rule. In such a language, (4) would have a possible reading on which it merely stated that Lois believes that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. But my concern here is explaining natural language in actual use. Such an artificial language would be far more unwieldy and full of ambiguity than natural language, since the audience would not be able to tell whether the speaker uttered (4) to say that Lois believes someone is self-identical or to say that Clark Kent and Superman are the same person.
beliefs. To solve the problem, we have to figure out what Lois is ignorant of, and then show that it is this ignorance, rather than irrationality, that explains her holding inconsistent beliefs.

An agent who believes/expresses inconsistent singular propositions is irrational only if he or she does so *knowingly*. That is, an agent is irrational only if either s/he believes/expresses singular propositions that s/he *knows* to be inconsistent, or s/he is in an epistemic position such that s/he may infer that the propositions are inconsistent, and believes them anyway. Modern proponents of Millianism such as, e.g., Nathan Salmon, have a somewhat similar approach: they generally posit that Lois Lane is not irrational in expressing the inconsistent singular propositions *that Kent-Super flies* and *that Kent-Super does not fly* because she takes the proposition under different “propositional guises” such that she does not realize (and is not in a position to infer) that the singular propositions she express when uttering (8) and ¬(7) are inconsistent (see David Shier, Chapter 6.7 “Propositional Attitude Reports” in Russell, Gillian, *The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, London: Routledge, 2012, page 801, for discussion of propositional guises or “ways of taking propositions”). On the TIUT, the key to explaining why Lois is not in an epistemic position to infer

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41 Milianians who invoke the notion of propositional guises hold that belief is a binary relation between an agent and a (singular) proposition. However, the relation is mediated: agents do not *directly* believe those singular propositions—they believe them *via* a propositional guise. An agent believes a proposition in virtue of standing in some psychological relation to the propositional guise. The nature of the psychological relation depends on what guises are, and this varies from one theory to another. In fact, all Millian theories are notoriously vague about what propositional guises are. If guises were claimed to be propositions, then the psychological relation would be *belief*. If propositional guises were claimed to be *natural language sentences, sentence-like entities, mental representations in an internal code, or belief states*, rather than propositions, then the psychological relation would not be *belief*, but some other psychological relation (since belief is strictly the psychological relation between agents and propositions). Because of the propositional guise under which Lois believes the proposition expressed by (2) when presented by (2) she fails to fully grasp the nature of the proposition it expresses. She is partially ignorant about the properties and constituents of the proposition she believes. She can ’see’ only the guise under which she takes the proposition, and she cannot ’see’ the proposition behind the guise. A proposition could be presented under different guises to an agent, who might assent towards or accept as true the proposition under one guise, but not under the other. Here, the agent would fail to realize that the same proposition is presented twice over in different ways. In Salmon’s terminology (1989, 261), Lois Lane suffers from “propositional recognition failure” because she fails to recognize a proposition when presented under one propositional guise as a proposition she already believes but under a different propositional guise. When PROP-1 is presented by the sentence (1) she recognizes the proposition as something she believes; but when the same proposition is presented by (2) she fails to see that it expresses the same proposition. Salmon (1986) likens propositional recognition failure to the failure to recognize a familiar individual. For example, I might meet my mother on the street and not recognize her if she is wearing a mask. It would be inaccurate to say that I do not recognize my mother *tout court*. We want to say instead that I recognize her when she appears to me in some ways, and I can fail to recognize her when she appears to me in some other ways. Likewise, you can be familiar with a proposition, and assent to certain sentences expressing it, yet fail to recognize it as the very same proposition when it is presented
that she expresses inconsistent singular propositions is to be found in the *indexical* nature of proper names. She does not know that the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ have the same reference because she does not know that the dossiers labeled with this names and from whose labels she draws those names have the same subject. She does not *knowingly* express inconsistent propositions because she does not realize that the propositions expressed are inconsistent, and this is because she is (partially) ignorant about the propositions she expresses; to wit, she is partially ignorant about the contents of the proper names in the context. She would be irrational only if she believed inconsistent propositions while realizing them to be inconsistent.

The indexical nature of proper names explains how an agent is capable of expressing a proposition while being partially ignorant of the content of a proper name in a sentence he or she utters. As John Perry (1979) and David Kaplan (1989) have stressed in their important work on indexicals, an (automatic) indexical is such that the agent uttering the indexical in a particular context need only grasp the character of the indexical in order to load the content of the indexical in a context into a proposition. The agent may be ignorant of the content loaded into the proposition s/he expresses. For example, suppose I look out my window on April 1, 2014, see that it is sunny out, and utter “today is a sunny day.” The indexical expression ‘today’ automatically loads April 1, 2014 into the proposition. I have thus expressed the proposition that April 1, 2014 is a sunny day even if I am under the mistaken belief that the date is April 2, 2014 when I utter the sentence. My ignorance of the content of the indexical—my erroneous belief about the content of ‘today’ given the context I am in—

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Note that the TIUT appeals to a notion similar to propositional guises to explain why rational agents such as Lois Lane can rationally believe inconsistent propositions, such as the singular propositions that Kent-Super can fly and the singular proposition that Kent-Super cannot fly. Lois Lane does not recognize that (7) and (8)

(7) Clark Kent flies
(8) Superman flies

express the same singular proposition (but only when the speaker uses the names in a Millian way). She suffers from Salmon’s propositional recognition failure. This propositional recognition failure is explained in terms of the indexical nature of proper names.
does not alter the fact that I expressed a proposition about April 1 and not April 2. By using indexicals in a sentence, be they indexicals such as ‘today’ or proper names (which the TIUT claims are also indexicals), the content of the propositions an agent expresses may be \textit{masked} or \textit{hidden} from the agent. The content is automatically loaded into the proposition even if the speaker has erroneous beliefs about it or is ignorant about it. An agent using a proper name as an indexical in a sentence may therefore be partially ignorant about or have false believes with respect to the proposition he expresses when uttering the sentence.\footnote{Nathan Salmon (1986) also stresses this point: agents may express and believe propositions while at the same time being partially ignorant of their constituents. They may therefore simultaneously believe a proposition and its negation without being irrational, since their ignorance of the constituents of the propositions blinds them to their inconsistency.} \textit{It is this ignorance, not irrationality, which explains the agent’s expressing (and believing) inconsistent propositions.}\footnote{An \textit{enlightened} agent, by contrast with an unenlightened agent such as Lois Lane, cannot rationally accept (7) and \(\neg\) (8) or (1) and \(\neg\) (2), for an enlightened agent would realize that the names co-refer, and s/he either draws both names from the same dossier’s label (a dossier labeled with both names) or draws the names from distinct differently-labeled dossiers, but realizes that the dossiers have the same subject. The use of the proper names as indexicals does not mask the structure or nature of the proposition for an \textit{enlightened} agent because the enlightened agent’s different mental architecture (i.e., different dossier structures) places him/her in a distinct epistemic position giving him/her access to information about the nature and structure of the propositions expressed that the unenlightened agent lacks.}

Millians cannot appeal to the indexical nature of proper names to solve the problem of rational inconsistent belief, as the TIUT does. According to standard Millianism, \textit{there is nothing more to the meaning of a proper name apart from its referent.} The Millian denies that proper names have a \textit{character meaning}, as the TIUT maintains. Millians instead appeal to the notion of propositional guises or ways of taking propositions to explain how agents can be (partially) ignorant of the contents of the propositions they believe.\footnote{See Pelczar and Rainsbury (1998, 308-310) for an argument that construing proper names as indexicals would solve the problem of rational inconsistent belief. Their theory of names as indexicals is substantially different from that of the TIUT, for theirs does not invoke mental dossiers, nor does it provide that names can be used in ways in which they communicate conceptions. On their theory, proper names have character meanings, and their contents are always their referents, full stop. Therefore, their theory is a species of Millianism that differs from standard Millianism owing to their positing that proper names have character meaning. As a species of Millianism, the theory has the same difficulty in explaining the cognitive values and truth-value differences arising in Frege’s puzzles, even if it has an advantage over other forms of Millianism in addressing the problem of rational inconsistent belief in a way similar to the TIUT.} \textit{But Millians have never specified exactly what these propositional guises or ways of taking propositions are.} The TIUT, by contrast, gives us a concrete and specific
story explaining how an agent might believe a proposition while being ignorant about some of the constituents of the proposition. Again, the key is the indexicality of proper names.

The problem of rational inconsistent belief does not arise on the TIUT in the case of enlightened speakers such as Olson when they ascribe belief. According to the TIUT (as discussed supra in section 2.7.1), (3) and (4) express different propositions (qua Conception-Indicating ascriptions), with the consequence that an ascriber who uttered (3) and the negation of (4), (4n), would not be inconsistent. By contrast, according to Millianism, (3) and (4) express the same proposition and (3) and (4n) express inconsistent propositions. The Millian claim that the enlightened Olson would be inconsistent in uttering (3) and (4n) amounts to a reductio of Millianism. Olson is not ignorant the identity or Clark Kent and Superman and fully grasps Lois’ confused epistemic state. Millians cannot point out what Olson fails to realize to explain why he is inconsistent. This suggests that the only explanation for Olson’s inconsistency is irrationality. But Olson is not irrational. In uttering (3) and (4n) he does what any rational ordinary speaker would do. Even die-hard Millians would utter (3) and (4n) to ascribe belief to Lois when they are not wearing their philosopher hats. The Millian claim that (3) and (4n) are inconsistent is implausible because Millians can offer no reasonable explanation as to why a rational Olson would knowingly make these inconsistent statements. This strongly suggests that (3) and (4n) are not inconsistent after all, meaning that (3) and (4) do not express the same proposition as Millians claim.

2.9 Informative Identities without Substitution

In the literature on Frege’s puzzle about informative identity sentences, it is often assumed sub silentio that tautological-looking sentences such as (1) always express uninformative identities.

(1) Clark Kent is Clark Kent
This assumption goes back to Frege’s characterization of the identity sentences puzzle as he stated in On Sense and Reference. There, Frege posed the question why sentences of the form \( a=a \) were uninformative and one could tell them to be true just by inspection of their syntactic form, whereas sentences of the form \( a=b \) were informative and one could not tell them to be true or false merely by inspecting their syntactic form. The assumption that sentences of the form \( a=a \) can be determined to be true merely by inspection goes for logic, but not for natural language sentences. The TIUT recognizes the fact that a natural language sentence of the form \( a=a \), such as sentence (1), could express either an informative or uninformative identity. It depends on the speaker’s expressive intent. On their own sentences do not express propositions; it is speakers who use sentences to do so. On the TIUT, sentence (1) would express an informative identity if the first and second occurrences of ‘Clark Kent’ corresponded to two distinct ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier tokens in the speaker’s mind containing different conceptions, and the speaker intended the name ‘Clark Kent’ in a Conception-indicating way for both occurrences. I have discussed an example of (1) as an informative identity \textit{supra} in section 1.2—the case of Tom who meets a man named Clark Kent at a party and suspects he is the same Clark Kent with whom he went to Kindergarten in Smallville. Or consider Kripke’s Paderewski case discussed above in section 2.1. A man named ‘Peter’ might say ‘Paderewski the pianist has musical talent, but Paderewski the politician surely does not,’ failing to realize that the pianist and the politician are the same person. Someone might say to Peter ‘But Peter, Paderewski \textit{is} Paderewski’ to inform him that Paderewski the politician is the same person as Paderewski the musician. Here, ‘… Paderewski is Paderewski’ is used to express an informative proposition and not to point out the trivial fact that Paderewski is self-identical. The tokenings of ‘Paderewski’ allude to difference conceptions of the man—one the conception of a pianist and the other of a politician. For another example of (1) as an informative identity, consider the following scenario: Bill and Liz, a married cohabitating couple, are Clark Kent’s (Kent-Super’s) next door neighbors in Brooklyn. Bill
and Liz have met Clark Kent on several occasions. On each occasion, Bill and Liz have conceived Clark Kent as being their next-door neighbor and a reporter by profession. One day, Bill and Liz are at a party and meet a man who introduces himself as ‘Clark Kent,’ but he claims that he is a resident of Hoboken and a mechanic by trade. He denies ever having lived in Brooklyn, denies ever having worked as a reporter, or being Bill and Liz’ neighbor. Yet this Clark Kent (from the party) looks and sounds identical to the other Clark Kent (the neighbor). Bill and Liz suspect that this Clark Kent at the party is in fact the neighbor pretending to be someone else. Bill now wants to convey to Liz his belief that the Brooklyn resident reporter, their neighbor, is the Hoboken mechanic. To do this, Bill utters sentence (1) to Liz, ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent.’ Here, Bill uses (1) as an informative identity sentence to inform Liz that he believes that the Clark they have met at the party is Clark Kent, their neighbor. Here is what is going on, according to the TIUT, when Bill utters (1). Bill first entertains a dossier token labeled ‘Clark Kent’ that contains the conceptual representations named Clark Kent and lives in Hoboken, is a mechanic, met him at a party. Let us call the dossier type instantiated by Bill’s dossier token ‘DCK1.’ He draws the name ‘Clark Kent’ from the dossier’s label (he utters ‘Clark Kent’). With the second occurrence of ‘Clark Kent,’ he entertains a different dossier token, also labeled ‘Clark Kent’ and containing the representations named Clark Kent and lives in Brooklyn, is a reporter, is our next-door neighbor. Let us call the dossier type instantiated by Bill’s dossier token ‘DCK2.’ He draws the name ‘Clark Kent’ from the dossier token (he utters ‘Clark Kent’). Bill has thereby expressed the informative identity proposition whose structure is revealed by sentence (1)INF†:

\[(1)^{INF†} \text{ The subject individuating } D^{CK1} \text{ is the subject individuating } D^{CK2} \]

Liz may then report Bill’s belief back to him by uttering (3^) as a Conception-indicating ascription.

\[(3^) \text{ You believe that Clark Kent is Clark Kent} \]
(3\(^\dagger\)) below gives us a window onto the proposition expressed by Liz’ propositional attitude ascription (3\(^\dagger\)) (reporting that Bill believes (1)\(^{\text{INF}}\)):

\[
(3\(^\dagger\)) \quad \text{You (Bill) believe that the subject individuating } D^{\text{CK1}} \text{ is the subject individuating } D^{\text{CK2}}
\]

The semantics of the proposition expressed by (3\(^\dagger\)), schematized in a de re way vis-à-vis Kent-Super, are set out in 3\(^\dagger\)-s below:

3\(^\dagger\)-s Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Bill’s dossier token \(d^1\) instantiating the same dossier type, \(D^{\text{CK1}}\), as instantiated by Liz’ ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token \(d^3\) from whose label Liz draws ‘Clark Kent,’ and Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Bill’s dossier token \(d^3\) instantiating the same dossier type, \(D^{\text{CK2}}\), as instantiated by Liz’ ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token \(d^4\) from whose label Liz draws ‘Clark Kent,’ and Believes (Bill, \(<\text{the subject of } d^1, \text{the subject of } d^3>, \text{identity }>)

Uttering sentence (1) is an effective way to express an informative identity, and uttering (3) is an effective way to express a Conception-indicating ascription, given the facts of this particular conversational setting described here where Bill and Liz are each aware of the different conceptions they each associate with the name ‘Clark Kent.’ In conversational contexts in which the different conceptions are not as salient to the conversational participants as in the one describe above, uttering (1) would not be effective in communicating an informative identity, and uttering (3) would not be an effective in communicating a Conception-indicating ascription. The pragmatic ‘Meaning Consistency Principle,’ a corollary of Grice's Principle of Manner, discussed supra in section 2.7.2, explains why.

**Meaning Consistency:** Multiple occurrences of the same syntactic string in a sentence generally entail that the speaker meant the same thing by each occurrence.\(^{45}\) Occurrences of different syntactic strings entail a difference in meaning.

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\(^{45}\) By *generally*, I mean that there are exceptions when the conversational context makes it clear that the speaker means different things by the same expression (as in the Bill/Liz example), or where the grammar of the sentence entails a difference in meaning (e.g., in the sentence “Rose rose in popularity beginning in high school” we infer from the grammar that the two occurrences of “rose” must have different meanings).
According to the above Meaning Consistency Principle, speakers tend to avoid using ascriptions such as (1) or (3) (to express an informative identity or a Conception-indicating ascription, respectively), in general, because the repetition of the name ‘Clark Kent’ suggests that each occurrence of the name is synonymous. Here, however, the tokenings of ‘Clark Kent’ are not intended to be synonymous. The term “generally” in the above definition of Meaning Consistency indicates that there are exceptions to the general rule: two uses of the same expression might be used to mean different things if the conversational context in which the sentence uttered would alert the audience to the fact that the speaker is using them to mean different things. In cases such as Bill and Liz example, there is strong mutual knowledge between Liz and Bill regarding two different conceptions associated with the same lexical item—the name ‘Clark Kent,’ and these different conceptions are salient in the conversational context. Hence, Bill and Liz are aware that two occurrences of ‘Clark Kent’ might not mean the same thing in a sentence, overriding the general principle that syntactically identical strings are presumed to be synonymous. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that Bill would utter ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent’ merely to point out the obvious fact that Kent-Super is Kent-Super. (The utterance would communicate no relevant information, violating Grice’s maxim of relation). Realizing this, Liz is naturally attuned to the possibility that the two occurrences of ‘Clark Kent’ in Bill’s utterance are meant to be non-synonymous.

In conversational contexts in which this mutual knowledge is not as strong with respect to how the difference occurrences of ‘Clark Kent’ could differ in meaning as here, the principle of meaning consistency would counsel that a speaker ought to use different names to correspond to the different conceptions in order to avoid ambiguity. Where there is just one single name, ‘Clark Kent,’ as here, the speaker could coin partially descriptive names to refer to the same individual under different conceptions of him or her. For example, a speaker might coin the partially descriptive names ‘Clark from the party’ and ‘Clark our neighbor.’ Then the informative identity sentence would be: ‘Clark
from the party is Clark our neighbor.’ Or a speaker might coin the partially descriptive names ‘Clark the reporter’ and ‘Clark the mechanic,’ so that the informative identity sentence would be: ‘Clark the reporter is Clark the mechanic.’ The use of these partially descriptive names avoids the potential ambiguity that might be occasioned by tokening ‘Clark Kent’ twice over and uttering ‘Clark Kent is Clark Kent.’ Furthermore, uttering ‘Clark from the party is Clark our neighbor’ or ‘Clark the reporter is Clark the mechanic’ to express the identity has the advantage that the audience is clued into the different conceptions the speaker has in his dossiers of the individual referred to, for the conceptions the speaker associates with the names are built directly into the partially descriptive names.

To summarize my discussion in this section, I maintain that (1) could be used to express an informative identity, and (3) to express a Conception-indicating ascription, where the conversational participants are aware of the different conceptions attached to the names by the speaker and the speaker and his audience mutually know that they are aware of the relevant conceptions in the context.46 The use of (1) to express an informative identity represents an exception to the Meaning Consistency Principle because the conversational participants in the conversational context can readily determine from contextual clues that the speaker likely does not mean the same thing by the two tokenings of ‘Clark Kent’—that the speaker is using the names in a Conception-indicating way—and can puzzle out the different conceptions associated with them from contextual clues.

2.10 Informative Identities: A Priori or A Posteriori Propositions?

In Naming and Necessity, Kripke claims that true informative identity sentences such as ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ or ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ express necessary a posteriori propositions. I agree with Kripke about the now rather uncontroversial claim that the propositions expressed are

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46 And conversely, using sentences like (1) or (3) will be disfavored by speaker on pragmatic grounds (because of the Meaning Consistency Principle) where there is uncertainty whether the conversational participants will realize that the name is used to communicate different conceptions on different occurrences of it within a sentence.
necessary.\textsuperscript{47} However, in this section I shall argue, \textit{contra} Kripke, that \textit{strictly speaking} such identity sentences express necessary \textit{a priori} propositions. After arguing this, I then go on to argue that there is also a “looser sense” in which we might say that such propositions are \textit{a posteriori}. However, in this looser sense the propositions are \textit{contingent}.

Kripke’s claim that the propositions expressed by true informative identity sentences are both necessary and \textit{a posteriori} is controversial and it was considered revolutionary when he first made it in \textit{Naming and Necessity}. The standard view from the time of Kant through Kripke was that the necessary and the \textit{a priori} were coextensive. It was widely believed that no \textit{a posteriori} proposition could be necessary, and no necessary proposition could be \textit{a posteriori}.

Kripke supports his claim that true informative identities express \textit{a posteriori} propositions in two ways. First, he appeals to our untutored \textit{intuitions} that they are \textit{a posteriori}. Second, he offers a formal argument for his claim. The untutored intuition that they \textit{a posteriori} seems \textit{prima facie} compelling (although I shall argue that this intuition is ultimately erroneous). The intuition suggests to us that Hesperus’ identity with Phosphorus (they are both names of the planet Venus) or that Clark Kent’s identity with Superman cannot be discovered by armchair reflection; one would have to \textit{observe} something empirically to find out that these identities are true. The fact that the Astronomer who discovered that Hesperus and Phosphorus were the same celestial body used astronomical investigation, not pure mathematics or logic, to make the discovery, seems to militate in favor of the view that the proposition that Hesperus is Phosphorus is \textit{a posteriori}. And so does the fact that Lois Lane does not discover that Clark Kent is Superman merely through reflection, but rather only \textit{via} empirical evidence such as seeing Clark Kent changing into his Superman outfit or catching Kent-Super dressed as Clark Kent bending a bar of steel, or being told about the identity by Olson. As compelling as the intuition may be that the propositions expressed by these informative identities are \textit{a}
posteriori, I shall argue that they are in fact *a priori*, strictly speaking.

Kripke’s formal argument for the claim that they are *a posteriori*, which appears briefly on page 104 of *Naming and Necessity*, is flawed. The argument relies on the viability of the *strong* disquotation principle, which is now widely seen as false (as opposed to the *weak* disquotation principle, which is widely regarded as true).48 I will not examine Kripke’s formal argument here. See Soames’ 2003, pp. 379-89 for a detailed critique of Kripke’s formal argument for the *a posteriori* status of informative identities and Kripke’s problematic reliance on the strong disquotation principle. See also this footnote.49 To my knowledge, no philosopher other than Kripke has advanced any formal argument for the existence of necessary *a posteriori* identities.50 Hence, apart from untutored,

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48 The *weak* disquotation principle says: if a competent, sincere, reflective, and rational speaker *s* who understands a sentence *S* is disposed to accept *S*, and believes *S* to be true, then *s* believes the proposition semantically expressed by *S*. The *strong* disquotation principle says: If a competent, sincere, reflective, and rational speaker *s* believes a proposition *P*, then *s* will be disposed to accept any sentence *S* that *s* understands that expresses *P*.

49 Kripke formal argument that informative identity propositions are knowable only *a posteriori* is found on page 104 of *Naming and Necessity*:

“... we do not know *a priori* that Hesperus is Phosphorus, and are in no position to find out the answer except empirically... this is so because we could have evidence qualitatively indistinguishable from the evidence we have and determine the reference of the two names by the positions of the two planets in the sky, without the planets being the same.” (104)

Scott Soames, Jeff Speaks, and others have roundly criticized this argument. According to Jeff Speaks (www3.nd.edu/~jspeaks/courses/mcgill/415/kripke-identity-sentences.html):

“Kripke’s point seems to be that we could be in a qualitatively identical situation with respect to the contexts of introduction and use of these names, and yet, in that possible situation *w*, the sentence ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ could be false. [But] this argument seems puzzling: the sentence ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ expresses a different proposition as used in *w* than it does as used in the actual world. So why does the fact that the proposition expressed by this sentence in *w* is false show anything about the epistemic status of the proposition expressed by this sentence in the actual world? A way to fill the gap in the argument is *via* principles connecting acceptance of sentences with belief in the propositions expressed by those sentences. Consider, e.g., the following such principle:

If an agent understands some sentence *S* which expresses the proposition *p*, then: (the agent is justified in accepting *S* iff the agent is justified in believing *p*)

We can then read Kripke as arguing that agents cannot know *a priori* that ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ is true, and using the above principle to reach the conclusion that they cannot know *a priori* that Hesperus is Phosphorus.”

The problem with Kripke’s argument is that it goes through only if we accept the principle Speaks refers to, which is in fact the Strong Disquotation Principle. However, the Strong Disquotation Principle is highly dubious. See Scott Soames’ 2005, pages 379-89 for a critique of Kripke’s argument and a critique of the strong disquotation principle. Kripke himself most likely does not endorse the strong disquotation principle, as his Paderewski Puzzle (1979) can be seen as a *reductio* of it.

50 I shall have nothing to say here about Kripke’s argument that identity sentences expressing natural kinds, such as ‘Water = H2O,’ express necessary *a posteriori* propositions. Kripke’s argument for the *a posteriori* status of the propositions is
raw intuitions about the matter, there are scant grounds for maintaining that these sorts of propositions are a posteriori.

Before I argue that these identity propositions are a priori, it is necessary first to clarify what it means for a proposition to be a priori and what means for a proposition to be a posteriori. Following Fitch (1975, 243) I shall say that a proposition is a priori iff it is knowable a priori (even if the proposition is also knowable a posteriori), and a proposition is a posteriori iff it is knowable only a posteriori. Hence, mathematical propositions, (at least some of) which are knowable both on a priori and a posteriori grounds, are to be classified as a priori propositions.\textsuperscript{51} Propositions such as the proposition that Barack Obama was the president of the US in 2014, which are knowable only on a posteriori grounds, are to be classified as a posteriori propositions. Accordingly, I shall construe Kripke’s claim that true identity sentences express necessary a posteriori propositions as the claim that these propositions are knowable only a posteriori. I shall argue that the propositions expressed by true informative identity sentences involving proper names are a priori because they are knowable both on a posteriori and a priori grounds. The a posteriori way of knowing them is much more important and powerful because it enables the knower to draw many further inferences, whereas the a priori way of knowing them does not. It is for this reason that we have the powerful but erroneous intuition that they are a posteriori.

The A POSTERIORI way of knowing PROP-2 (the informative identity proposition expressed by ‘Clark Kent is Superman’)

Suppose Lois learns that her ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token (which we may call ‘d\textsuperscript{CK}’), which is about Kent-Super and contains a Clark Kent-y conception, has the same subject as her ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token (which we may call ‘d\textsuperscript{SM}’), which is about Kent-Super and contains more closely tied to his essentialism. There are distinct arguments behind the claims about the epistemological status of these sorts of propositions on the one hand and identity propositions involving proper names on the other.

\textsuperscript{51} For example, the a priori proposition expressed by ‘1+1 = 2’ can be justifiably believed on the basis of empirical evidence. I can have empirical evidence for it if I, e.g., place one apple into a basket, another apple, and then count them to see that I end up with two apples.
a Superman-y conception. It follows as a matter of pure logic that she believes that the dossier types instantiated by $d^{CK}$ and $d^{SM}$, $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$ respectively, are individuated by the same subject. That dossier types $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$ are individuated by the same subject is precisely the proposition that, according to the TIUT, is expressed by (2)—PROP-2. (See sects. 2.4, 2.5). By learning a “local” fact about her own mental architecture, i.e., that her dossier tokens $d^{CK}$ and $d^{SM}$ have the same subject—Lois thereby comes to believe the general proposition that dossier types $D^{CK}$ and $D^{SM}$ are individuated by the same subject.

Here, Lois learns PROP-2 via a posteriori means. No one can tell that Lois’ dossier tokens $d^{CK}$ and $d^{SM}$ have the same subject by armchair reflection. To find out whether Lois’ dossier tokens have the same subject we would have to examine the dossier tokens in Lois’ mental architecture—the ‘Clark Kent’-labeled and the ‘Superman’-labeled dossier tokens—to determine whether they have the same subject. This would involve an inquiry into causal-historical facts; we would need to learn about the events that led to the creation of these dossier tokens in Lois’ mind. This would be a purely empirical/a posteriori inquiry. As Hume taught us, we cannot know anything about what-causes-what by pure reason. Lois needs empirical evidence to learn that her two dossiers have the same subject. She would need to see Kent-Super dressed as Clark Kent bending a bar of steel, or catch Clark Kent changing into his Superman outfit, or notice that Clark Kent and Superman look suspiciously similar, to realize that that her dossiers have the same subject. These sorts of empirical evidence will make it manifest to her that her dossier tokens are about the same man. Hence, the discovering of an informative identity, such as that Clark Kent is Superman, is here an empirical process involving empirical evidence. The agent empirically finds out that his distinct dossier tokens have the same subject, thereby coming belief that, in general, the dossiers types instantiated by tokens of those types are individuated by the same subject.

The A PRIORI way of knowing PROP-2 (the informative identity proposition expressed by ‘Clark Kent is Superman’)
In addition to being known in an *a posteriori* way as described above, the proposition expressed by (2), PROP-2, can also be known in an *a priori* way. Therefore, it is an *a priori* proposition (since a proposition being knowable *a priori* is sufficient for it being classified as an *a priori* proposition).

According to the TIUT’s account of the content of proper names when used in a Conception-indicating way, as set out in section 2.4 *supra*, the proposition expressed by (2), PROP-2, could also be expressed by (2)††.

\[(2)^{††}\]

The subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception is the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception.

Note that (2)†† is a *logically true* and therefore, one may know *a priori* that it expresses a true proposition. Therefore, any rational agent who read (2)†† and noticed that it was logically true should assent to it and be willing to assert it. As discussed in section 2.8, *supra*, The TIUT posits that the agent would count as understanding sentence (2)†† even if s/he knows next to nothing about the properties of the bearer of ‘Kent-Super’ and even if she fails to realize that ‘Kent-Super’ refers to the same person as ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman.’ Grasping the character of the names is sufficient for understanding them. *Via* the weak disquotation principle, we may infer that any such agent who understand (2)†† and assents to utterances of the sentence believes the proposition semantically

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52 Technically, (2)†† is not expressive of an *a priori* proposition because it is not *a priori* knowable whether Kent-Super exists. A sentence that would in fact express an *a priori* proposition would be: ‘If Clark Kent exists, then Clark Kent is Superman’, for on the TIUT this would mean the same as the logically true sentence: ‘If the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception exists, the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Clark Kent-y conception is the subject individuating the dossier type individuated by Kent-Super as subject and a Superman-y conception.’ This sentence is logically true. For the sake of exegetical simplicity, I leave out the “if...exists” clause and treat (2)†† as if it genuinely expressed an *a priori* proposition.

53 In order for (2)†† to be logically true, it would have to be uttered in a language in which it is stipulated by convention that syntactically identical strings are synonymous, so that there can be no doubt that the first and second occurrences of ‘Kent-Super’ in (2)†† refer to the same individual. Note that what I call the Meaning Consistency Principle already creates this presumption that syntactically identical expressions have the same meaning/semantic value.

54 According to the weak disquotation principle, if a competent, sincere, reflective, and rational speaker s who understands a sentence S is disposed to accept S, and believes S to be true, then s believes the proposition semantically expressed by S
expressed by (2)††, PROP-2. Since the agent’s reason for believing PROP-2 is the mere fact that he recognizes that a sentence that he understands is logically true, rather than empirical evidence, his or her grounds for believing PROP-2 are a priori. Hence, PROP-2 is a priori because it’s being knowable a priori is sufficient for classifying it as an a priori proposition, even if it is also knowable empirically (via learning that one’s dossier tokens, d^{CK} and d^{SM}, have the same subject).

**Why learning PROP-2 a posteriori is more important than learning it a priori**

When Lois comes to believe the proposition expressed by (2) via believing the a posteriori proposition that her dossier tokens d^{CK} and d^{SM} have the same subject, she is able to draw a host of important and interesting inferences. Upon learning this, she realizes that all of the information in her two dossiers, her ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’-labeled dossiers, relate to the same individual. She may infer that they guy she works with is the Superhero she loves, that if her colleague named ‘Clark Kent’ ate eggs for breakfast then a flying super hero did, that if her mild-mannered colleague is 6’ 9”, so is her super hero love interest; that the guy she calls ‘Clark Kent’ is amazingly strong, and so forth. By contrast, when she believes the same proposition merely by accepting (2)†† and seeing that it is logically true, she is able to infer no further facts whatsoever from her belief. She cannot even infer from her acceptance of (2)†† that sentence (2) expresses a true proposition, since she does not recognize that sentence (2) and (2)†† express the same proposition. Lois might assent to (2)†† and assert that it expresses a true proposition, but nevertheless insist that the person referred to as ‘Kent-Super’ in sentence (2)††, whoever he may be (and if he in fact exists), is not the individual she knows as ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman.’ As I claimed in section 2.8, Lois may rationally fail to realize that the names ‘Clark Kent,’ ‘Superman’ (used in (2)), and ‘Kent-Super’ (used in (2)††) all co-refer. She grasps the character of the names without realizing that they have the same content. Hence, Lois suffers here from a phenomenon akin to what Nathan Salmon (1986) has called “propositional recognition failure” because she understands sentences (2) and (2)†† without seeing (and without being able to see no
matter how much she reflects upon the matter) that they express the same proposition.

We might say that Lois realizing that PROP-2 is true via learning that \((2)^{\dagger}\) expresses a true proposition results in an “inferentially impoverished” belief that PROP-2. When she learns PROP-2 via learning that her dossier tokens \(d^{\text{CK}}\) and \(d^{\text{SM}}\) have the same subject, she ends up with an “inferentially rich” belief that PROP-2. This explains why we erroneously intuit that PROP-2 must be a posteriori: anyone who learns it merely via a priori means ends up with “inferentially impoverished” belief—unable infer anything useful or interesting about the world. By contrast, anyone who learns it via empirical means, by believing that their dossier tokens have the same subject, ends up with an “inferentially rich” belief. Since we are interested in what agents believe in inferentially rich ways, and tend to ignore situations in which agents believe propositions in inferentially impoverished ways, we focus only on the case where Lois learns PROP-2 in an a posteriori way. Nevertheless, PROP-2 is to be counted as a priori because it can be learned by a priori means, even if learning the proposition this way results in an inferentially impoverished belief.

We are interested in an agent’s beliefs to be able to make sense of and predict his or her behavior, both linguistic and otherwise. However, an agent’s inferentially impoverished beliefs tell us little or nothing about what the agent will do or say. We care only about inferentially rich beliefs. Hence, we would not ascribe to Lois Lane the belief that Clark Kent is Superman merely because she reads sentence \((2)^{\dagger}\) and recognizes it as logically true and therefore expressive of a true proposition. Rather, we would only ascribe to her the belief that PROP-2 if she came to believe it via believing the a posteriori proposition that \(d^{\text{CK}}\) and \(d^{\text{SM}}\) have the same subject, for this would result in her having an inferentially rich belief. The expression “belief” (as well as other expressions used to ascribe propositional attitudes) is used in propositional attitude ascriptions to ascribe only inferentially rich beliefs (or other attitudes) to the ascribee, and filter out inferentially impoverished beliefs. Hence, I claim that sentence (6)
(6) Lois Lane believes that Clark Kent is Superman

would express a literally false proposition even if Lois believed the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause in an inferentially impoverished way. Sentence (6) would express a true proposition only if Lois believed the proposition referred to by the ‘that’-clause in an inferentially rich way.

We can recognize and understand propositions in different ways; different ways of knowing propositions involve different inferential strengths

As Nathan Salmon has stressed (1986), propositions can be grasped in different ways. One may believe a proposition when it is presented one way but fail to believe it when presented another way (in which case one suffers from “propositional recognition failure” because one fails to recognize the proposition as the same when it is presented in different ways). Lois may come to believe PROP-2 by believing that (2)†† expresses a true proposition and at the same time believe that (2) expresses a false proposition: she fails to realize that the same proposition is presented by the two sentences. The TIUT’s account of proper names as indexicals explains propositional recognition failure: agents may understand two sentences by grasping the character of the indexicals it contains without realizing that these indexicals have the same content. Lois Lane may understand both sentence (2)†† and sentence (2) and see that (2)†† must express a true proposition (because she realizes it is logically true) but nevertheless she fails to realize that the proposition it expresses is the same one that (2) expresses. She does not realize that the name ‘Kent-Super’ in sentence (2)†† has the same referent as either of the names ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman’ in sentence (2).

A ‘Looser sense’ in which these propositions are a posteriori

I stated at the beginning of this section that I would argue that identity propositions such as PROP-2 are a priori strictly speaking. I also stated that there was a looser sense in which we can say that propositions such as PROP-2 are a posteriori. I shall now discuss this looser sense on which such propositions are a posteriori, and then go on to argue that on this looser sense the propositions are
contingent rather than necessary. Hence, it will turn out that we can classify these propositions as either necessary a priori or as contingent a posteriori, but not as necessary a posteriori.

The weak disquotation principle states that if an agent accepts sentence $s$, a sentence the agent understands, and $s$ expresses proposition $p$, then $s$ believes $p$. In accord with this principle, I claimed that Lois Lane believes PROP-2 because of her acceptance of sentence (2)$^††$, a sentence that Lois understands and that expresses PROP-2. I suggested that strictly speaking Lois does understand the sentence because understanding a proper name requires only grasping its character and does not require having descriptive knowledge about the referent (or content) of the name. On this view, it takes very little to understand a proper name. It takes little more than understanding that a syntactic string was meant by the speaker as a name and perhaps knowing whether the speaker intended the name to have a Millian or Conception-indicating reading. For Lois to count as understanding (2)$^††$, she does not need to know anything substantive about the name’s referent, nor realize that ‘Kent-Super’ refers to the same individual as the names ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman.’ But the open question is whether there is another sense of understand, a non-strict or looser sense on which we can say that Lois does not understand sentence (2)$^††$. I believe there is. Speaking non-strictly, there is an important sense in which she does not understand the name ‘Kent-Super’ as used in sentence (2)$^††$: in the sense of knowing who. She does not know anything about ‘Kent-Super’—she does not know who he is in that she cannot say anything substantive about him. She cannot describe him at all. She associates with the name no identifying descriptive knowledge whatsoever. So even if I want to say she grasps the name ‘Kent-Super’ strictly speaking because realizes the string is being used as a name and she grasps the character of the name, she does not understand who Kent-Super is in a different, more robust sense of knowing anything about him that could be used to pick him out of a crowd. She lacks descriptive identifying information about him.\footnote{The contrast between robust and non-robust understanding can be illustrated by an example from physics. Suppose that a science novice attends a seminar on particle physics and comes to believe, based on what he heard at the seminar, that}
Now let us consider whether there are any such things as posteriori necessary identities if we consider PROP-2 to be a posteriori on the non-strict sense. I want to answer this question in the negative. Here is why. When we start requiring agents to have knowledge who information before they count ask understanding proper names and proper name-containing sentences, we are therefore requiring them to have all sorts of contingent knowledge about the referents of the proper names in the sentences, since knowledge who information is (obviously) contingent. There may very well be a non-strict sense in which an informative identity sentence such as ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ expresses an a posteriori proposition. But on this non-strict sense, an agent must have the ability to draw inferences about contingent facts upon realizing the identity is true (e.g., that a reporter is also a superhero) to count as realizing the identity, and this involves having contingent information about the referents of these names.

Concluding Remarks on Necessary a posteriori Propositions

Propositions are a posteriori iff they are only knowable a priori. Propositions knowable both a posteriori and a priori are a priori propositions. According to the TIUT, informative identity propositions are knowable both a priori and a posteriori. But it is only when the proposition is known a posteriori, via learning that her dossier tokens d^{CK} and d^{SM} have the same subject, that the agent can infer anything interesting. As ascribers, we are only interested in agents’ beliefs that will allow us to predict their behavior, both verbal and otherwise, and to predict the further inferences they will draw.

charmed baryons have masses ranging between 2300 and 2700 MeV/c2. Apart from understanding that charmed baryons are some sort of particle, this science novice does not understand the function of a particle in the atom and does not grasp the meaning of “MeV/c2” except insofar as s/he realizes that is refers to a measurement of the mass of a particle. He does not understand what mass is as it pertains to a particle, only possessing the layman’s non-scientific understanding of “mass” as it applies to macroscopic objects. Are we prepared to say that this science novice understands the proposition that charmed baryons have masses ranging between 2300 and 2700 MeV/c2 well enough to say that s/he really believes it? There is a non-robust sense of understanding according to which we can say that s/he does understand (and believe) this proposition, given that he is disposed to asent to utterances of the sentence ‘Charmed baryons have masses ranging between 2300 and 2700 MeV/c2.’ However, there is also a robust sense of understanding on which we would say that this science novice does not understand the proposition well enough to count as believing it. His belief is highly inferentially impoverished. He cannot infer any further facts about particle physics from his belief, nor can he say why this fact is important or how it fits in with quantum theory. I do not think there is any non-arbitrary answer to the question whether the science novice really understands or believes the proposition. All we can do is recognize that there are different answers we can give to this question depending on our standards for what should count as sufficient understanding when we attribute belief.
on the basis of what they already believe. Hence, we are disposed to discount the \textit{a priori} way of knowing an informative identity proposition, and therefore, we have the erroneous intuition that informative identity propositions are knowable only \textit{a posteriori}.

The TIUT explains why we have the strong (but ultimately erroneous) intuition, emphasized by Kripke (1979, 1980), that the learning of the necessary propositions such as those expressed by informative identity sentences involves an empirical discovery. The TIUT offers us a picture of necessary identity propositions (necessary, because of the rigidity of the names in the identity sentences expressing them) that are discovered to be true empirically because the discovery process involves the agent learning that her dossier tokens $d^\text{CK}$ and $d^\text{SM}$ have the same subject, i.e., learning empirical facts about his own mental architecture. The agent empirically finds out that his distinct dossier tokens have the same subject, thereby coming belief that, in general, the dossiers types instantiated by tokens of those types are individuated by the same subject. The TIUT agrees with Kripke to the extent that it posits that the necessary propositions expressed by ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ and ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ are \textit{usually} learned empirically, and we are mostly interested in the cases in which agents learn those propositions empirically. However, the TIUT takes issue with Kripke’s claim that these propositions are therefore \textit{a posteriori}. There are ways of learning them that are strictly speaking \textit{a priori} and this is sufficient to classify them as \textit{a priori} propositions. If we speak non-strictly, there is a sense on which these propositions can be considered \textit{a posteriori}, but they are contingent in this non-strict sense because contingent \textit{knowledge who} information about the bearers of proper names is part and parcel of the proposition grasped.
2.11 Ascribing Belief to Non-Verbal Agents

Suppose that Lois Lane were a non-verbal but intelligent deaf-mute or an intelligent non-human animal incapable of speech. She does not use or recognize proper names because she incapable of using language. Nevertheless, she might very well believe that Clark Kent and Superman are two distinct individuals and that Superman flies and Clark Kent does not, despite her inability to express these beliefs using language. Despite the fact that Lois neither uses nor recognizes the names ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman,’ we may report her beliefs using sentences (5n) and (6).

\[
(5n) \quad \text{Lois Lane does not believe that Clark Kent flies}
\]

\[
(6) \quad \text{Lois Lane believes that Superman flies}
\]

On the TIUT, the truth of (5n) and (6) does not entail that Lois is disposed to utter either ‘Clark Kent flies’ or ‘Superman flies,’ or that she would assent to either of these sentence. Furthermore, the truth of (5n) and (6) do not entail that Lois has dossiers that she labels with the names ‘Clark Kent’ or ‘Superman.’ The semantics of these sentences (when those names are used in a Conception-indicating way) reveal why:

\[
5n-s \quad \text{Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token } d^1 \text{ instantiating the same dossier type, } D^{CK} \text{, as instantiated by the ascriber’s ‘Clark Kent’-labeled dossier token } d^3 \text{ from whose label the ascriber draws the name ‘Clark Kent,’ and NOT Believes (Lois, <the subject of } d^1, \text{ flies>)}
\]

\[
6-s \quad \text{Kent-Super is such that he is the subject of Lois’ dossier token } d^3 \text{ instantiating the same dossier type, } D^{SM} \text{, as instantiated by the ascriber’s ‘Superman’-labeled dossier token } d^4 \text{ from whose label the ascriber draws the name ‘Superman,’ and Believes (Lois, <the subject of } d^3, \text{ flies>)}
\]

As shown above, the Conception-indicating character does not require that the ascribee label his or her dossiers in any particular way. Rather, it requires only that the ascriber labels his or her dossier in accordance with the name uttered (and that s/he draws the name from the label). The Conception-indicating character requires that the ascribee have a dossier token of the same type as the one from
whose label the ascriber draws the name, but importantly the ascribee may have a dossier token of this type even if he or she labels differently his/her dossiers or if his/her dossiers lack labels altogether. So when uttering (5n) and (6), an ascriber may use the names ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ to express contrasting conceptions of Kent-Super (which aim to be similar to the non-verbal Lois’ contrasting conceptions) even if Lois does not associate those conceptions with those names (or for that matter, with any names whatsoever). Lois has two distinct dossiers for Kent-Super, one containing a Clark Kent-y conception and the other a Superman-y conception, even though her dossiers are not labeled with proper names because she is non-verbal. This is a powerful feature of the TIUT—it explains how we can use proper names to ascribe belief to non-verbal agents.

Furthermore, the TIUT explains how one can ascribe belief in cases in which the ascribee is verbal but where the ascriber does not know which contrasting proper names the ascribee would use. Consider the Hesperus/Phosphorus case: for many centuries, the ancient Greeks believed that Hesperus, a celestial body seen at a certain location in the morning sky at certain times of the year, was a distinct object from Phosphorus, a celestial body appearing in the evening at a different time of the year at a different location in the sky. However, ancient Babylonian astronomers had previously discovered that Hesperus and Phosphorus were the same celestial body, which we today refer to as the planet ‘Venus.’ Eventually the Greeks came to accept the Babylonian view and came to believe that Hesperus was Phosphorus. ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ were Greek names for this object as seen in the evening and as seen in the morning, respectively. We do not in fact know what names the Babylonians used prior to the discovery of the identity of Hesperus and Phosphorus. We also know that the ancient Maya independently discovered the identity of Hesperus and Phosphorus, but we do not know what names they used either. Nevertheless, we can accurately say (using the Greek names)

56 The fact that the ascribee’s dossier tokens lack the representation bears the name ‘NN’, where ‘NN’ is the name uttered inside the ‘that’-clause, means that the ascriber’s ‘NN’-labeled dossier token cannot match the ascribee’s corresponding dossier perfectly, but it may be substantially similar such that it is a dossier of the same type.
that the Maya and the Babylonians discovered that Hesperus was Phosphorus. The TIUT explain why we may use the Greek names to say this even though the Maya and the Babylonians did not use them. A speaker can utter the names ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus,’ to pick out the dossier types instantiated by his or her ‘Hesperus’-labeled and ‘Phosphorus’-labeled dossier tokens, and say that the Babylonians and the Maya had dossier tokens of these types such that they did not initially realize that dossier token instantiating these types had the same subject, and then came to later to believe that they did. There is nothing in the semantics implicating that the Maya or Babylonians ever labeled their dossiers using these names.

This feature gives the TIUT an advantage over the theory or Graeme Forbes (1990), which like the TIUT invokes of the notion of mental dossiers. Problematically, on Forbes’ theory, the sentence ‘The Maya believed that Hesperus was Phosphorus’ would be glossed as:

Hesperus is such that, for the Maya’s so-labeled way of thinking of it, α, and Phosphorus is such that, for the Maya’s so-labeled way of thinking of it, β: Believed (The Maya, < α = β >)

The problem is the “so-labeled” language: According to Forbes’ theory, the names used in the ‘that’-clause of every propositional attitude ascription are the labels of the ascribee’s dossiers. Thus, according to Forbes, when I utter ‘The Maya believed that Hesperus was Phosphorus’ I am saying that the Maya had dossiers that they labeled ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus,’ these dossiers were both about the same object but represented that object in different ways, α and β, and the Maya believed that these dossiers were about the same object. The problem is that the Maya did not label their dossiers with these names. On Forbes’ theory, it is not possible to ascribe belief where one does not know what names the ascribee used or uses to label his or her dossiers. This is a serious problem with the theory. Plainly, we can ascribe belief to agents when we do not know how they label their dossiers, as in the case of the Maya/Babylonians and Hesperus/Phosphorus. We can moreover ascribe belief even when we are dealing with a non-verbal agent (who does not use names as the labels of his or her dossiers), as
2.12 Solution to Kripke’s Puzzle

One of Kripke’s principal aims in his famous paper “A Puzzle about Belief” (1979), in which he first discussed the Puzzle that has come to be called “Kripke’s Puzzle,” was to defend Millianism from a certain reductio argument often used against it by neo-Fregeans. Let is call this neo-Fregean argument against Millianism “The argument from substitution failure.”

The Argument from Substitution Failure

(i) Millianism entails that the following principle, SUBSTITUTIVITY, is viable:

SUBSTITUTIVITY: because co-referential names do not differ in any semantic property, they are freely substitutable into propositional attitude and modal contexts without changing the proposition expressed or its truth-value.

(ii) However, SUBSTITUTIVITY entails that agents sometimes believe inconsistent propositions. For example, Lois Lane would believe both that Kent-Super flies (when she conceives him in a Superman-y way) and that he does not fly (when she conceives him in a Superman-y way).

(iii) A rational agent would not, upon reflection, believe inconsistent proposition.

(iv) Lois Lane is a rational and reflective agent, yet she believes inconsistent propositions even after rational reflection upon her beliefs.

(v) Therefore, SUBSTITUTIVITY (and Millianism itself) must be false. Co-designative names are not substitutable in propositional attitude contexts.58

Kripke aims to show that the argument from substitution failure, sketched above, does not in fact impugn Millianism because the same sort of conclusion (where a rational and reflective agent ends up looking like they believe a contradiction) follows from a valid argument that makes no presumption

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57 Metalinguistic theories of proper names run into similar problems. Metalinguistic theories of proper names, although they differ from one another in the details, maintain, in rough sketch, that the meaning of a proper name ‘NN’ is the bearer of ‘NN’ or the individual called ‘NN.’ On such a theory, the ascription ‘The Maya believes that Hesperus was Phosphorus’ would mean the same as ‘The Maya believes that the bearer of ‘Hesperus’ was the bearer of ‘Phosphorus.’ The problem is that the Maya were not familiar with either of these names, so they did not entertain any beliefs about them.

58 Neo-Fregeans would allow substitution of co-referential names only if the names had the same sense.
either that SUBSTITUTIVITY or Millianism is true. Therefore, Millianism is not the culprit. The argument from substitution failure fails to refute Millianism, according to Kripke, because the very same puzzle about belief ascription arises without presupposing Millianism. All we need to do to generate the puzzle is to assume the innocuous weak disquotation principle.

There are two versions of Kripke’s puzzle, but here I discuss only the Paderewski version of the puzzle, which is in fact the more challenging version of the puzzle. Kripke asks us to consider the case of Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860 – 1941), a noted Polish pianist who also a politician—the prime minister of Poland for most of 1919. Suppose that a man named Peter is familiar with Paderewski the pianist and with Paderewski the politician, but Peter fails to realize that these are the same person. Peter thinks the pianist and the politician are two separate people. He assents to the sentence ‘Paderewski had musical talent’ when he takes the speaker to be referring to the pianist, and assents to the sentence ‘Paderewski did not have musical talent’ when he takes the speaker to be referring to the politician (believing that politicians rarely have musical talent). Now consider the Weak Disquotation principle.

**WEAK DISQUOTA**

If a competent, sincere, reflective, and rational speaker $s$ who understands a sentence $S$ is disposed to accept $S$, and believes $S$ to be true, then $s$ believes the proposition semantically expressed by $S$.

Based on Peter’s assent to ‘Paderewski had musical talent,’ a sentence Peter understands, we may infer that he believes that Paderewski had musical talent. Based on his assent to ‘Paderewski did not have musical talent,’ a sentence Peter understands, we may infer that he believes that Paderewski did not have musical talent. Hence, we may infer that Peter believes both that Paderewski had musical talent and that he did not have musical talent. So Peter it looks like Peter believes inconsistent propositions. And Kripke has shown this without making any assumptions about whether Millianism is true or
whether SUBSTITUTIVITY is viable. He has merely assumed the unobjectionable weak disquotation principle. So there is a puzzle about belief ascription that arises whether or not we presuppose Millianism is true. The puzzle arises merely if we presuppose an unobjectionable principle such as Weak Disquotation, which Nathan Salmon once described as so undeniably true as to be practically analytic.  

Kripke concludes that Peter’s case “lies in an area where our normal apparatus for the ascription of belief is placed under the greatest strain and may even break down.” (Kripke, 1979, 452). According to Kripke, the problem is that we have no plausible answer to the question: does Peter believe or does Peter disbelieve that Paderewski had musical talent? We have four possible answers to this question, none of which Kripke thinks are acceptable:

(a) Peter believes neither that Paderewski had musical talent, nor that he lacked it.
(b) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent.
(c) Peter believes that Paderewski did not have musical talent.
(d) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent and that he did not have musical talent.

But what exactly is wrong with option (d)? Why should we not say that Peter both believes and disbelieves that Paderewski had musical talent? Why not accept that rational agents can believe inconsistent propositions? Kripke thinks that a reflective and rational agent should be able to examine the content of belief and, given enough time to reflect, see that there is an inconsistency and correct him- or herself. Kripke writes: “…surely anyone … is in principle in a position to notice and correct contradictory beliefs if he has them.” But I think this notion that a rational agent should be able to examine the contents of his beliefs, as if they were perfectly transparent to him/her, is implausible. In section 2.8 above where I discussed the problem of inconsistent rationality, I argued (more or less in

59 Stated by Salmon during a seminar at the CUNY Graduate Center circa 2012.
agreement with many Millians such as Nathan Salmon and other Millians who speak or ways of taking propositions or propositional guises) that agents may not always be able to see the contents the propositions they believe. Their contents are partially masked. The TIUT takes the fundamentals of this Millian approach—"guise Millianism"—to be essentially correct, except that the TIUT explains the inability of the agent to see the propositions he believes transparently in terms of indexicality of proper names. Proper names are indexicals, whose characters but not contents are transparent to the agent. Peter both believes and disbelieves that Paderewski had musical talent but he is not irrational for doing so because he does not realize that his beliefs are inconsistent and cannot realize this no matter how long he reflects on the matter. The information that the propositions are inconsistent is not inside the Peter’s head, nor is it inferable from information inside his head.

Some philosophers have noted that Kripke’s puzzle presents a puzzle not so much about the nature of the propositions that Peter believes, but is fundamentally a puzzle about belief attribution. What is puzzling is how we should express what Peter believes “in the idiom for belief ascription provided by English, if we limit ourselves to identifying the object of his beliefs [with the name

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60 There is a distinction to be drawn between the following ascription sentence forms:

- Peter believes P and disbelieves P (= Peter believes P and believes NOT P)
- Peter believes P and does not believe P (= Peter believes P and it is not the case that Peter believes P)

I think that the former ascription could be true, since the TIUT posits (as do the Millians) that agents may rationally believe singular propositions and their negations, i.e., rationally believe and disbelieve singular propositions. (See the discussion on the Problem of Rational inconsistent belief, supra at section 2.7). However, the second ascription is necessarily false; this follows from the law of non-contradiction. If Peter believes P, it is false that he fails to believe P. If it is the case that Peter believes P, then it is not the case that he does not believe P. There is a difference in meaning between ‘X disbelieves P’ (which is the same as ‘X believes NOT P’) and ‘X does not believe P’ (which is the same as ‘It is false that X believes P’). Ascribers would be guilty of contradicting themselves if they uttered: ‘Peter believes that Paderewski was musically gifted and does not believe that Paderewski was musically gifted,’ but I show that ascribers would not contradict themselves if they uttered: ‘Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent and disbelieves that he had musical talent.’
‘Paderewski’].” Admittedly, it sounds somewhat awkward or unidiomatic to utter (10) and leave it at that:

(10) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent and disbelieves that he has musical talent.

I believe (10) expresses a true proposition. Nevertheless, there is something unidiomatic or awkward about it. Speakers would probably use a different, more idiomatic sentence to communicate information about Peter’s confused and inconsistent belief with respect to Paderewski. Why is sentence (10) unidiomatic and awkward sounding? Why would it not be uttered by most speakers? What other, more idiomatic or informative ways would ordinary speakers find to ascribe belief to Peter? This is the issue to which I shall now turn.

First, I shall briefly revisit the issue of substitution in Hesperus/Phosphorus and Kent/Superman sorts of cases where two names used in the propositional attitude ascription pairs. Then I will come back to the Paderewski case, which involves just one name.

As discussed in section 2.7, according to the TIUT, in the Hesperus/Phosphorus and Kent/Superman cases speakers can utter Millian (coarse-grained) or Conception-indicating (finer-grained) ascriptions, depending on their expressive purposes. Sentence (11) bellow would be a Millian *ascription* in the Hesperus/Phosphorus case relating to an ancient Greek astronomer living in an era before it had become known in Greece that Hesperus was identical to Phosphorus:

(11) The ancient Greek astronomer believed that Venus was visible in the morning but also disbelieved that Venus was visible in the morning.62

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62 ‘Hesperus’ was the ancient Greek name for the planet Venus when observed in the evening (at a certain location in the evening sky during certain portions of the year), and ‘Phosphorus’ the ancient Greek name for the planet Venus when observed in the morning (at a different location in the morning sky during certain portions of the year). The Greeks long believed that Hesperus and Phosphorus were two distinct celestial bodies. At some point, the Greeks learned from the
(11) has the same logical form as (10). The ascription attributes inconsistent beliefs to the ancient Greek astronomer using one single name, ‘Venus,’ just as (10) attributes inconsistent beliefs to Peter using one single name, ‘Paderewski.’ The ancient Greek Astronomer believes inconsistent singular propositions of which Venus is a constituent. The fact that the same name, ‘Venus,’ appears twice over suggests that we are attributing inconsistent beliefs to the ancient Greek astronomer (pursuant to the Meaning Consistency Principle). Though expressing a true proposition, (11) is nevertheless unidiomatic and awkward. I think the syntactically *de re* attitude ascription (12), below, would be a more usual and idiomatic way to express the same proposition.

(12) The ancient Greek astronomer believed *of* Venus both that it was visible in the morning and that it was not visible in the morning.

Consider now the *Conception-indicating ascription* (13):

(13) The ancient Greek astronomer believed that Phosphorus was visible in the morning but disbelieved that Hesperus was visible in the morning.

In (13), the use of two different co-designative proper names (‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’) alerts the audience, pursuant to the Meaning Consistency Principle (see sections 2.7.2, 2.9, *supra*), that the speaker is drawing a distinction between different conceptions.

**Meaning Consistency:** Multiple occurrences of the same syntactic string in a sentence generally entail that the speaker meant the same thing by each occurrence.\(^6\) Occurrences of different syntactic strings entail a difference in meaning.

\(^6\) By *generally*, I mean that there are exceptions when the conversational context makes it clear that the speaker means different things by the same expression (see Bill/Liz example, section 2.8 *supra*), or where the grammar of the sentence entails a difference in meaning (e.g., in the sentence “Rose rose in popularity beginning in high school” we infer from the grammar that the two occurrences of “rose” must have different meanings).
The Meaning Consistency principle explains for the differences between (11) and (13). It explains why we would not utter (11) as a Conception-indicating ascription and would not utter (13) as a Millian ascription. In (11), the use of the same name twice over, ‘Venus,’ indicates to the audience that the speaker means the same thing on each of its occurrences, so the audience will tend to suppose that the speaker is attributing inconsistent beliefs to the ascribee. In (13), the use of different names usually entails that the speaker means something different by the different names.

There is a pragmatic principle of conversation that I think explains why (12) is a more idiomatic than (11), the “Attribution of Consistency” principle:

**Attribution of Consistency:** We tend to attribute beliefs to ascribees in a way that avoids making them sound irrational.

Sentence (11) is somewhat ambiguous because a sentence of this form *could* be used to state that a person is irrational and believes a proposition and its negation *knowing full well that they are inconsistent*. It probably would not be understood that way, since, on the principle of charity, we tend to presume that people are not irrational in this sort of way. (12), by contrast with (11), is not similarly ambiguous—syntactically *de re* attitude ascriptions with the “of”-locution are specially tailored so that speakers avoid the seeming attribution of irrationality to the ascribee.

There is a further pragmatic principle of conversation that I think explains why (11) would be an unusual, unidiomatic sentence:

**Preference for Fine-grained Ascriptions:** When ascribing belief, one should give as much information about conceptions as is possible when two conceptions of the same object are being contrasted, if one can easily do so and if one is aware of the relevant conceptions in the conversational context. (This would be a corollary of Grice’s maxim of quantity.)

Sentence (13) is a more natural and idiomatic attitude ascription than (11) because (13) gives much

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64 This is a principle plausibly following from Grice’s maxim of manner.
more information to the audience than (11) would, consistent with Grice’s maxim of quantity. It tells the audience about the different ways that the ancient astronomer conceived Venus. It imparts this additional information in an efficient way, without the use of any additional words (assuming that the audience knows that ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ are different names for Venus and is familiar with the conceptions the names are associated with). If an ascriber were to utter the coarse-grained Millian ascription (11), the audience would have to ask the ascriber follow-up questions to elicit additional information regarding contrasting conceptions to understand why the ancient astronomer entertained inconsistent beliefs (unless this information about contrasting conceptions was already clear from the conversational context). A speaker who uttered (11) without following-up by providing details about the reasons for the ancient Greek astronomer’s inconsistent beliefs with respect to Venus would be flouting cooperative principles of conversation.

There is an important and salient difference between the Hesperus/Phosphorus and the Kent/Superman cases on the one hand, and the Paderewski case on the other: in the former cases, two syntactically different co-referential names (Clark Kent/Superman; Hesperus/Phosphorus), each conventionally associated with a different conception, are readily available to speakers to draw contrasts between different conceptions because of the fact that the conceptions are conventionally associated with the names. In the Paderewski case, by contrast, there is just one name. Speakers cannot resort to pre-established names, each typically associated with a different conception, to draw any contrasts when ascribing beliefs to Peter. The principle of Meaning Consistency admonishes us, ceteris paribus, to have two expressions in order to indicate differing conceptions to in order to make a Conception-indicating ascription with respect to Peter’s beliefs. Arbitrarily inventing a second name for Paderewski from whole cloth would confuse the audience (especially since the audience, in this case, would not be familiar in advance with the different conceptions associated with the names by the speaker). So generally an ascriber would coin context context-derived contrasting names for
Paderewski by combining ‘Paderewski’ with descriptions that key in the audience to the contrasting conceptions. For example, an ascriber could utter (14) as a Conception-indicating ascription.

(14) Peter believes that Paderewski the pianist had musical talent and he disbelieves that Paderewski the politician has musical talent.

By adding descriptions to the name ‘Paderewski,’ the partially descriptive names ‘Paderewski the pianist’ and ‘Paderewski the politician’ can be used in (14) to make a Conception-indicating ascription just as the names ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ were used in (13) in the Hesperus/Phosphorus case to make a Conception-indicating ascription. In both (13) and in (14) different conceptions in different dossiers are being referred to—the use of different co-referential names alerts the audience to this. The salient difference between the cases is that in (13) the speaker can resort to two different co-referential names conventionally associated with particular conceptions, whereas on (14) the speaker has to invent his own names, in order to get his audience to understand that the names are co-referential, and clue his audience in to the contrasting conceptions each name is associated with.

We would not typically utter the somewhat unidiomatic (10)

(10) Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent and disbelieves that he had musical talent.

because the conversational principles of Attribution of Consistency and of Preference for Fine-grained Ascriptions lead us to prefer ascriptions of the form of (14) or (15) instead.

(14) Peter believes that Paderewski the pianist had musical talent and he disbelieves that Paderewski the politician has musical talent.

(15) Peter believes of Paderewski both that had musical talent and lacked musical talent.

The syntactically de re ‘of’ locution in (15) makes it abundantly clear what the speaker means.
It forecloses the possibility that the speaker means that the speakers intentionally and knowingly believed inconsistent propositions. In most cases, and if it can be imparted without great circumlocution, we prefer more informative and finer-grained Conception-indicating ascriptions, such as (14), which provide information about conceptions that indicate to the audience to how Peter believes what he believes, if this can be easily done in the conversational context. To accomplish the latter, we coin partially descriptive names when there are not already suitable distinct co-referential names in existence available to draw the contrast.

To sum up, the TIUT answers Kripke’s puzzle as follows. Peter both believes and disbelieves the singular proposition that Paderewski had musical talent. His beliefs are inconsistent. He is not irrational or illogical for entertaining these inconsistent beliefs, and we do not suggest that he is irrational when we ascribe to him a belief in inconsistent singular propositions. Nevertheless, we generally have an aversion towards locutions that have the outward appearance of attributing inconsistent beliefs, and we prefer ascription sentences that give the audience information about conceptions because this provides a higher level of clarity, in line with Grice’s maxim of quantity. Hence, ascription sentences such as (10) sound unidiomatic and we tend not to utter sentences of this form.

2.13 Conclusion

The very existence of Frege’s puzzle is evidence that proper names do not always contribute merely their referents to the propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur. They sometimes also contribute to the proposition a way of conceiving or thinking about the referent of the name. Common sense tells us that speakers do not utter ‘Clark Kent is Superman’ merely to say that a person is identical to himself. However, there are also some sentences in which proper names seem to be playing a simpler role: they are just referring, and not contributing a conception. This is the case both
in simple sentence and in propositional attitude ascriptions. So proper names have these two uses: merely to refer, and to refer and communicate a conception. I call the former ‘Millian’ uses and the latter ‘Conception-indicating’ uses. The notion that names are used in more than one way should not strike us as outlandish, nor should it be outlandish to think that this difference in use is semantic, and not merely pragmatic, in nature. After all, definite descriptions are used in two ways, either referentially or attributively, and many philosophers think that difference in use marks a semantic distinction; e.g., Devitt (2007). The “argument from convention” (see the introduction, supra), on the basis of which Devitt and Reimer argue that the distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions is semantic in nature, applies in equal measure to the distinction between proper names used in a Millian or Conception-indicating way.

From Kripke we have learned at least two important truths about proper names. The first is that they are rigid designators. The second is that there is no descriptive or conceptual element built into their meanings. They are synonymous with neither ordinary definite descriptions nor rigidified definite descriptions. Descriptivism is false. Since the conceptions communicated are not part of the meaning of proper names, we have to explain how speakers communicate them. There are two possible routes. The first would be to propose that conceptions are communicated via pragmatic, rather than semantic, mechanisms, and that the meaning of a name is exhausted by its referent. This is a route pursued by many modern Millians. There are many problems associated with taking that route, though I have not discussed them in this paper. The second route, the one taken by the TIUT, is to propose that the mechanism is semantic: proper names are sometimes used as indexicals that pick out the conception that the speaker associates with the name at the time he utters it. The TIUT shows how this occurs consistent with the thesis that proper names are rigid designators. This is where the TIUT is decisively superior to Descriptivism. It is also decisively superior to Millianism because of its respect for the intuitive cognitive and truth-values of sentence like (1)-(6). Millians do violence to the intuitive
cognitive and truth-values of these sentences. The TIUT does what neither Millianism nor Descriptivism is able to do: explain how names such as ‘Clark Kent’ and ‘Superman’ can rigidly refer to the same individual and at the same time differ in content without being synonymous with definite descriptions.

Once we allow that speakers can use names just to refer, we have to deal with the problem of rational inconsistent belief. Rational speakers may entertain inconsistent beliefs. Lois Lane inconsistently believes that Kent-Super can and cannot fly. Peter both believes and disbelieves that Paderewski had musical talent. Unless we are willing to say that these speakers are irrational, which we obviously should not, we have to explain their inconsistency as arising out of ignorance of some fact or facts. But what are these speakers ignorant of? The TIUT and guise Millianism take a somewhat similar approach here and posit that speakers do not have full cognitive access to the propositions they assert and believe. Content is partially externalist. Some Millians say that speakers do grasp the propositions the express/believe directly, but only via a propositional guise that may hide part of the content of those propositions. Problematically, all accounts of propositional guises are obscure and lacking in the details. The TIUT’s approach is similar to that of the guise Millians, but it offers a specific proposal: names are indexicals with a character meaning as well as content. Character is the guise behind which content hides. Speakers are inconsistent because they understand the character of the propositions they express and believe, but not the content (or at least, not the full content).

In the introduction, I claimed that to solve Frege’s puzzle, we needed a theory of proper names consistent with the six theses:
1. Proper names are rigid designators [From Kripke’s modal argument].

2. Proper names do not have descriptive meanings [From Kripke’s semantic and epistemic arguments].

3. Identity sentences like (1)-(2) express different propositions with the same modal profile [That they have the same modal profile follows from the modal argument; that they express different propositions follows from intuitions brought to light by Frege’s puzzle about identity sentences].

4. Propositional attitude ascriptions like (3)-(4) and (5)-(6) express different propositions differing in truth-value [From intuitions brought to light by Frege’s puzzle about propositional attitude ascriptions].

5. Sometimes proper names are used merely to refer, contributing only their referents to the propositions expressed.

6. Sometimes proper names are used both to refer and to convey conceptions. They contribute something other than merely their referents to the propositions expressed.

I have shown that the TIUT respects all of these theses. It also offers an answer to the problem of rational inconsistent belief and Kripke’s puzzle. Hence, the TIUT constitutes a very attractive theory of proper names.

The TIUT is also attractive because it is consistent with how one might go about describing Lois Lane’s ignorance of Clark Kent’s identity with Superman in a common sense, pre-theoretical way. Lois Lane fails to realize that there are two sets of information in her mind that are in fact about the same person, Kent-Super. So let us call each of those sets of information a “dossier.” Let us say that each dossier “is about” Kent-Super in virtue of some property and call this property “subjecthood.” Lois’ two dossiers have the same subjecthood, so they are about the same person. Lois’ dossiers contain different representations: one represents its subject as a mild-mannered reporter, the other as a superhero. Let us call these representations “conceptions.” Lois can introspect and see these conceptions clearly. She can see that the conceptions in the dossiers represent their subjects in

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65 I leave open the possibility that there may be some uses of proper names that are not rigid. But I presuppose that all of the uses in both versions of Frege’s puzzle are rigid.
very different ways, and she believes that they are about different individuals. Although both dossiers have the same subjecthood, Lois cannot introspect, no matter how hard she reflects upon the matter, and determine that the dossiers have the same subjecthood. This is because the subjecthood is at least in part a relational property, inhering in facts external to Lois’ mind. In much the same way, you could not look at a photo of Obama in which he more closely resembled Malcolm X and tell, just by the way the photo looks, that this is a photo of Obama and not Malcolm X. What makes the photo a photo of Obama is relational and causal, and therefore something not evident within the four corners of the photo. One cannot see the history of the photo in the image. Likewise, the property of dossier subjecthood is such that Lois does not have cognitive access to it. Lois cannot find out that the dossiers are about the same person just by armchair reflection. She would have to look at these extra-mental facts to find out that these dossiers are about the same individual.

When those in the know about the identity want to describe Lois’ epistemic state, they utter ‘Lois does not believe that Clark Kent is Superman.’ On the TIUT, this ascription sentence means exactly what the above story relates about Lois. The sentence means that Lois has one dossier with which she associates the name ‘Clark Kent’ and another with which she associates the name ‘Superman,’ and she does not realize these dossiers are about the same individual. When we want to say, in general, what anyone who suffers from the sort of confusion that Lois does, i.e., they fail to realize that Clark Kent is Superman, we say that, in general, failing to realize that Clark Kent is Superman means not realizing that one type of dossier has the same subject as another type of dossier. Specifically, not knowing that Clark Kent is Superman means not knowing that that the type of dossier that is about Kent-Super and represents him in one way—a Clark Kent-y way—is about the same person as a different type of dossier that represents him in a different way—a Superman-y way. In order to specify these types of dossiers, ascribers entertain dossiers token of these types and then make them salient by drawing the names from these dossiers. They thereby contribute the dossier types that
their dossier tokens instantiate to content as per the Conception-indicating character.

Propositional attitude ascriptions involve the ascriber imagining the way that the ascribee views the world and creating within his own mind a temporary model of the ascribee’s worldview. The ascriber forms a dossier structure that mimics and mirrors that of the ascribee. Then the ascriber is able to speak about his own dossier tokens as if they were those of the ascribee. He may do so by relying on the fact that, if he has understood the ascribee’s cognitive state well enough, his own dossier tokens are of the same type as those of the ascribee. His own tokens and Lois’ (or anyone’s who confused about the identity of Clark Kent and Superman) all belong to the same type, and therefore, the ascriber can point to his tokens as instating that type and say that all those who do not realize the identity fail to realize that these dossier types (the one’s his own tokens instantiate) are individuated by the same subject, Kent-Super, the subject of his own dossier tokens.
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