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INDEXICAL PROPOSITIONS AND *DE RE* BELIEF ASCRIPTIONS

ABSTRACT. I develop here a novel version of the Fregean view of belief ascriptions (i.e., sentences of the form 'S believes that p') and I explain how my view accounts for various problem cases that many philosophers have supposed are incompatible with Fregeanism. The so-called problem cases involve (a) what Perry calls essential indexicals and (b) *de re* ascriptions in which it is acceptable to substitute coreferential but non-synonymous terms in belief contexts. I also respond to two traditional worries about what the sense of a proper name could be, and I explain how my view provides intuitively pleasing solutions to Kripke's 'London'–'Londres' puzzle and his Paderewski puzzle. Finally, in addition to defending my view, I also argue very briefly against Russellian alternatives to Fregeanism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Let us assume that the term 'believes', as it appears in ordinary belief ascriptions like

(1) Tom believes that Ted Kennedy is tall,

expresses a relation that holds between believers (e.g., Tom) and propositions (e.g., that Ted Kennedy is tall). This is surely the standard view of the semantics of belief ascriptions, and I think it's the correct view, but I haven't the space to motivate this here, so I will take it as a working assumption in this paper.

Given this assumption, the question arises: What is the nature of these propositions? Numerous answers have been given to this question, but I want to concentrate on two of them: the first is that a proposition is a complex entity whose components are intensional objects, in particular, *meanings*, or *senses*, or *concepts* (where these are taken to be abstract objects, not private, mental objects); and the second is that a proposition is a complex entity whose components are actual objects, properties, and relations. Thus, according to the first view, we can represent the proposition that Ted Kennedy is tall as follows:

<the sense of 'Ted Kennedy', the sense of 'is tall'>;

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and according to the second view, we can represent it as follows:

<Ted Kennedy, the property of being tall>.

I will say that propositions of the first sort are *general propositions* (or GPs), whereas propositions of the latter sort are *singular propositions* (or SPs). (Of course, the important difference between the SP and the GP here concerns the propositional constituents corresponding to 'Ted Kennedy'; for the sense of 'is tall' and the property of being tall are not importantly different for our purposes, and indeed, some philosophers would even identify them.)

It might seem that the dispute between the GP view and the SP view (henceforth, GPV and SPV) is deeply connected to the *existence* of the two sorts of propositions, especially GPs, which might seem controversial or dubious to some people. But I think this is a mistake. For I think it can be argued that (a) contrary to first appearances, SPV is on no better ontological or epistemological footing than GPV (in particular, if the properties and relations that are supposed to be the constituents of SPs exist, and if humans can acquire knowledge of them, then the same is true of the meanings, or senses, or concepts that are supposed to be the constituents of GPs); and (b) when we're doing semantics (and/or pragmatics) we should no more worry about ontological commitments to abstract objects than we should when we're doing mathematics, physics, psychology, or whatever (we can worry about this later on, while doing philosophy of semantics, just as we do in connection with mathematics, physics, psychology, and so on). I cannot take the space to argue for these two claims here, so again, I am going to take them as working assumptions in this paper (though I might add here that I think (a) and (b) are both fairly widely accepted these days).[1] In any event, the upshot of this is that our question should not be understood as a metaphysical or ontological question at all. It is a purely semantic (or perhaps, semantic/pragmatic) question. We might put the question like this: *Assuming that GPs and SPs both exist, are ordinary-language belief ascriptions like (1) about GPs or SPs?* (One might also put the question like this: Do the 'that'-clauses in such belief ascriptions refer to GPs or SPs? But this question is not exactly the same.[2]) In any event, GPV is the view that our belief ascriptions are always about GPs, and SPV is the view that sometimes (in particular, when the 'that'-clause in question contains expressions that, according to SPV, are directly referential, e.g., proper names and/or indexicals) they're about SPs.

In recent years, SPV has been growing in popularity, and at present, it could probably be called the "received view" among people who work in this area. This is largely because there are various problem cases that

people think cannot be handled by GPV. In this paper, I argue that this stance is mistaken. In Section 2, I quickly run through some of the cases that are supposed to raise problems for GPV (and we'll also see there that there are related problems for SPV). In Section 3, I develop a novel (non-Fregean) version of GPV and show how it accounts for all of the so-called problem cases. This is the main point of the paper – to defend my view against standard objections to GPV; but in Section 4, I say a few words, very briefly and sketchily, about how I would go about providing a positive argument for favoring my non-traditional version of GPV over SPV (and the various non-traditional versions of SPV that have surfaced in recent years in response to the various cases that seem to raise problems for traditional SPV[3]).

2. SOME PROBLEMS FOR TRADITIONAL GPV (AND TRADITIONAL SPV)

Probably the central reason for the widespread dissatisfaction with GPV is that people have come to think that it cannot account for various sorts of so-called *de re* belief ascriptions. The primary examples here are cases involving indexicals, e.g., cases like

(2) Tom believes of Ted Kennedy that he is tall.[4]

But the problem of *de re* ascription arises in the absence of indexicals as well. For instance, let us imagine that all of the following is true: you and I are standing in Frank's backyard, looking at Frank's neighbor, Kelly; another friend of ours, Pat, knows Kelly very well and believes that Kelly is cheap; but Pat is not with us now and, indeed, doesn't know Frank at all and doesn't know that Kelly is Frank's neighbor; finally, you and I know that Pat is unaware that Kelly is Frank's neighbor, and I know that you know this, and you know that I know it. Now, suppose that I say to you

(3) Pat believes that Frank's neighbor is cheap,

nodding toward Kelly as I say 'Frank's neighbor'.[5] Intuitively, it seems clear that my utterance of (3) is true. But this generates a *prima facie* problem for GPV, because that view seems to entail that my utterance is false. For (a) GPV seems to entail that (3) says that Pat believes the GP *that Frank's neighbor is cheap* (i.e., the GP <the sense of 'Frank's neighbor', the sense of 'cheap'>, or perhaps <the individual concept *Frank's neighbor*, the concept or property of *cheapness*>); and (b) it seems that

Pat *doesn't* believe this GP, because he doesn't know that Kelly is Frank's neighbor – after all, he wouldn't assent to the sentence 'Frank's neighbor is cheap'.

Cases like (3) seem to motivate SPV, but it's important to think of cases like these alongside other cases that seem to motivate GPV. In particular, I am thinking of the familiar Fregean cases of substitution failures involving coreferential terms. For instance, suppose that the Superman story is literally true, that Betty knows about Lois's Superman-Clark Kent confusion, and that she utters

(4) Lois believes that Superman flies but doesn't believe that Clark Kent flies.

Intuitively, this utterance seems obviously true, but traditional SPV entails that it's false (indeed, contradictory) because the SP <Clark Kent, being-one-who-flies> just *is* the SP <Superman, being-one-who-flies>.[6] (Note that Betty's being "in the know" is important to the intuition here. Even if we could be persuaded that Lois holds contradictory beliefs, i.e., that she both believes and disbelieves the SP <Clark Kent, being-one-who-flies>, it seems wholly implausible to suppose that *Betty* has contradicted herself in uttering (4). It seems to me that traditional SPV just flagrantly gets wrong *what Betty meant* in uttering (4), and so it couldn't possibly be the correct theory of what (4) says.)

The real challenge, to both GPV and SPV, is to account for (3) and (4) *at the same time*. Cases like (3) establish that it is sometimes permissible to substitute terms into belief contexts in ways that traditional GPV forbids; and cases like (4) establish that it is sometimes *not* permissible to substitute into belief contexts in ways that traditional SPV permits. That is, some ordinary talk about beliefs seems to be coarse-grained in an SPV-esque way, and some ordinary talk about beliefs seems to be fine-grained in a GPV-esque way. The challenge is to come up with a theory that can account for all of the cases here. We can call this the substitution/*de re* problem.

A second problem for traditional GPV is a version of what Perry (1979) calls the problem of the essential indexical. This is brought out very clearly by the following example, derived from an example of Higginbotham's (1995). Suppose that a dentist is performing a root canal on Lance at 2:00 p.m. and that she has told Lance that it will be over at 4:00 p.m.; and suppose that at 2:00 p.m., as the dentist starts the root canal, she and her assistant notice that Lance has written "Over at 4:00 p.m." on the palm of his hand. The dentist might nod toward this inscription and whisper to her assistant:

(5) Lance believes that his root canal will be over then.

Now suppose that later, at 4:00 p.m., the dentist pulls off her rubber gloves and, seeing that Lance has noticed this and is smiling, whispers to her assistant:

(6) Lance believes that his root canal is over now.

According to GPV, what concepts do the words 'then' and 'now' contribute to the propositions picked out by (5) and (6)? Well, traditional versions of GPV have it that, in (5), the word 'then' contributes the concept *4:00 p.m.* This seems plausible enough. But we cannot say the same thing about 'now' in (6). To begin with, it should be clear that in uttering (6), the dentist has not ascribed the same belief content to Lance that she ascribed to him when she uttered (5). After all, (6) could be true, even if Lance doesn't know that it's presently 4:00 p.m. and even if he has forgotten that the root canal was supposed to be over at 4:00 p.m. Moreover, even if he does remember this, i.e., does still believe that his root canal is to be over at 4:00 p.m., if he doesn't also realize that it's *presently* 4:00 p.m., and doesn't believe that his root canal is presently ending, then we would not count (6) as true. In short, (6) makes what Perry calls an *essential* use of the indexical 'now': it seems that we can't capture the belief that it ascribes to Lance without using an indexical. And this raises a worry for GPV-ists, because it's not clear what GP they could take (6) to be about. It's not clear what concept Lance is employing to pick out the time 4:00 p.m. One might attack GPV by saying: "It may be that in addition to not knowing that it's presently 4:00 p.m., Lance isn't representing the present time in any way other than the 'present-time way'; thus, it may be that he isn't employing *any* general concept (i.e., any Fregean sense) that picks out the present time; if so, then it seems that he doesn't believe *any* GP here; but it seems that (6) could still be true – he could still believe that his root canal is over *now*".[7]

(And again, there is also a problem here for traditional SPV, for that view entails that the sentence 'Lance believes that it's 4:00 p.m. now', uttered at 4:00 p.m., ascribes to Lance a belief that is trivially true; but surely, it does no such thing.)

Finally, there are familiar objections to GPV arising from worries about what the sense of a proper name could be. In particular, there is the worry that different people often seem to associate different senses with the same name, and there is the Kripkean worry that any description 'D' that is taken to be the sense of a name 'N' must either (a) contain substantive information about the referent of 'N', in which case 'N is D' will not be

"trifling", as we would expect it to be if 'D' really captured the meaning of 'N', or else (b) not contain any substantive information about the referent of 'N', in which case 'D' will fail to fix the reference of 'N'.[8]

3. A NOVEL VERSION OF GPV

In this section, I formulate a novel and non-traditional version of GPV that solves all the problems mentioned in the previous section. There are two central ways in which my theory diverges from traditional GPV: one of them has to do with the *nature* of the GPs that (on my view) our belief ascriptions are about, and it enables me to avoid the problem of the essential indexical; the other has to do with the semantic complexity of ordinary belief ascriptions, and it enables me to solve the substitution/*de re* problem. I address the former in Section 3.1 and the latter in Section 3.2. The discussion in Section 3.2 is carried out in terms of cases not involving proper names, but in Section 3.3, I show how my view carries over to cases involving names; I also show there how my view provides intuitively pleasing solutions[5] to Kripke's 'London'–'*Londres*' puzzle and his Paderewski puzzle, and finally, at the end of Section 3.3, I explain how my view avoids the two traditional worries about the senses of proper names just mentioned at the end of Section 2.

3.1. *Indexical Senses and GPs, and the Problem of the Essential Indexical*

The first non-traditional aspect of my view that I want to bring out is this: on my view, senses (and hence, GPs) can have indexical content. Thus, for instance, the sense of the word 'now' is something like *the present time*; and the sense of 'here' is something like *the present place*; and the sense of the demonstrative 'that' is something like *the contextually determined object*; and the sense of 'she' is something like *the contextually determined female*. This is very non-traditional. According to traditional GPV, different uses of words like 'now' and 'that' and 'she' have different senses, different modes of presentation that are specific to the given context. (This was Frege's 1919 view, and it has since been developed by a number of philosophers, e.g., Evans 1981 and Peacocke 1981. I will argue against this view, as well as the views of Forbes 1987 and the early Kaplan 1968–1969, in Section 3.2.) In contrast to this, what I am proposing is that the word 'now' has *one* sense that's operative for all of its (literal) uses; i.e., the word *type* has one meaning. This, I think, is very intuitive: the word 'now' always *means* the same thing; it's just that in different contexts, it *refers to*

different times. And the same goes for other indexicals, e.g., 'here', 'that', 'she', and so on. Indeed, I am going to endorse this view in connection with proper names as well; for instance, the sense of the name 'David' is something like *the contextually determined bearer of 'David'*. (Burge 1973 and Katz 1990 have endorsed similar views of the senses of proper names, but my semantic theory of belief ascriptions involving names is going to be original.) I should note here that by endorsing this view of the senses of proper names, I do not mean to commit to the claim that names *are* indexicals. My claim is merely that names have senses that are similar in certain ways to the senses of indexicals. And this much should not be surprising; for since, e.g., 'David' has many bearers, it refers to different objects in different contexts, and the reference of any given token of 'David' is determined largely by context. Even those who think that names are importantly different from indexicals can admit that names have senses of this kind; e.g., Perry, who argues not just that names are importantly different from indexicals, but also that names don't contribute senses to propositions, admits that names have something like a context-sensitive content of this sort.[9]

Going hand-in-hand with my claim that senses and GPs can have indexical content is this point: I reject the traditional Fregean principles that (i) senses are modes of presentation that determine reference, and (ii) GPs have fixed truth values (and truth conditions) across all contexts. On the view I'm proposing, senses are more accurately thought of as *meanings*, or *concepts*, and reference is determined not by sense alone, but by sense and context together.[10] (One might wonder why sense is needed at all to determine the reference of an indexical, i.e., why the reference of an indexical can't be fixed by context alone. Well, suppose that you and I are watching two children play, one boy and one girl, and I say, "I think that he's the cuter of the two". You will know that 'he' refers to the boy even if I don't point at the boy. How do you know this? By knowing what 'he' means. The reference of 'he' is fixed by sense and context, and without the former, you couldn't possibly know what 'he' refers to. The same is true of all indexicals, even pure demonstratives like 'that': if you're looking at an object and I say "That is a good one", then ordinarily, you can know that I'm referring to the object you're looking at only if you know that 'that' means *the contextually determined object*; if 'that' meant *the one my grandmother stole*, then my token of 'that' wouldn't necessarily refer to the object before you.)

Likewise, on my view, GPs do not determine truth conditions. The truth conditions of a sentence are determined by its meaning (i.e., the GP it expresses) together with context. Thus, on my view, in contrast to traditional

Fregean versions of GPV. GPs do not have fixed truth values and fixed truth conditions across all contexts; a GP can have different truth conditions (and different truth values) in different contexts. For instance, the sentence 'She is an American citizen' has a certain meaning in English, but it doesn't acquire a truth condition until it is used in a particular context; e.g., if I use it while pointing at Madonna, then it is true if and only if Madonna is an American citizen. (The same goes for the famous Fregean example, 'It's raining'. It has sometimes been argued that different utterances of this sentence "say different things" and, hence, express different propositions, e.g., *that it's raining in L.A. on June 3, 1950*; thus, some have concluded that propositions have fixed truth values across all contexts.[11] But if GPs can contain indexical concepts (and as we'll see below, it would be exceedingly odd to rule out such GPs) then at least some propositions won't have fixed truth values across all contexts – for instance, the GP *that it's raining here and now*. According to my theory, this GP is the literal meaning of the sentence type 'It's raining here and now', though my view can still account for the intuition that different utterances of this sentence "say different things", because (a) people can use this sentence to express different propositions on different occasions, and (b) even if two utterances of this sentence both expressed the above indexical GP, they could still have different truth conditions and, hence, could still be thought of as "saying different things".)

Now, of course, SPV-ists can also endorse the existence of meanings of this sort, i.e., meanings that combine with contexts to determine truth conditions. Indeed, this is essentially what *characters* are in the later Kaplan (1989). My claim here, though, isn't just that there *are* such things as indexical meanings, or indexical GPs; it's that some of our belief ascriptions are *about* indexical GPs (in particular, their 'that'-clauses refer to such GPs). More specifically, I think that some belief ascriptions involving *essential* uses of what I will call *reflexive indexicals*[12] are about indexical GPs (and as we'll see shortly, I think that by noticing this, we can solve the essential-indexical objection to GPV that I sketched in Section 2). Kaplan would not go along with this; on his view, the 'that'-clauses in such belief ascriptions denote SPs, not characters. (It is also worth noting here that my GPs are importantly different from later-Kaplanian propositions, which are SPs. One apparent similarity here is that on Kaplan's view, SPs do not have truth values once and for all – they only have truth values when evaluated in particular circumstances; but in general, my GPs don't even have truth *conditions* until they are put into contexts.)[13]

Let me now explain how my view delivers a solution to the essential-indexical objection outlined in Section 2. The objection, recall, is that it seems that the dentist's utterance of

(6) Lance believes that his root canal is over now

could be true, even if Lance isn't employing any general concept (i.e., any Fregean sense) that denotes the present time and, hence, doesn't believe any GP here. My response is that even if Lance doesn't know that it's presently 4:00 p.m., he does have access to a concept that (in the present context) denotes 4:00 p.m., namely, the indexical concept *now*. Moreover, this seems to fit with what the dentist means to *say* in uttering (6): she doesn't mean to say that Lance believes that his root canal is over as of 4:00 p.m.; she means to say that Lance believes that his root canal is over *now*, or *at the present time*. Indeed, even if Lance does believe that his root canal is over as of 4:00 p.m., if he doesn't know that it's presently 4:00 p.m., and if he doesn't also believe that his root canal is presently ending, then intuitively, (6) is *false*. So on my view, (6) says just what it seems to say, namely, that Lance believes the GP *that his root canal is over now*.[14]

This view can also be applied to essential-indexical cases involving certain other reflexive indexicals, e.g., 'here'. Suppose that I'm kidnapped, blindfolded, tied up, and left alone in a place about which I have no information, and suppose that I utter:

(7) I believe that the kidnappers will be back here in an hour.

On my view, when I utter (7), I am saying that I believe the GP *that the kidnappers will be back in the present place in an hour*.

It is important to note, however, that I do *not* intend this analysis to be applied to cases involving (a) non-reflexive indexicals like 'it' and 'then' (or at any rate, non-reflexive indexicals that aren't being used as Castañedian quasi-indicators – I'll say more about this in Section 3.2), or (b) non-essential uses of reflexive indexicals like 'here' and 'now', or (c) proper names, or (d) referential uses of definite descriptions. In Section 3.2, I will distinguish two different kinds of belief ascriptions, which I will call *de dicto* and *de re* ascriptions; according to this distinction, the above utterances of (6) and (7) will be *de dicto*, and ordinary cases involving (a)–(d) will be *de re*.[15] Now, the analysis provided here for (6) and (7) is supposed to cover all *de dicto* cases, but it is not supposed to cover *de re* cases; in Section 3.2, I will provide a different analysis for *de re* ascriptions. For now, though, let me just say a few words about a case of type (b) to illustrate why the above *de dicto* analysis – i.e., the analysis

provided for (6) and (7) – won't work for such cases. Suppose that two pirates are looking for a buried treasure and one of them points at the ground and says:

(8) I believe that the treasure is buried here.

And suppose that the other one shakes his head in disagreement, points at a different spot, and utters his own token of (8). If we applied the above *de dicto* analysis here, it would entail that when the second pirate uttered (8), he said that he believes the very same thing that the first pirate said that he believes, namely, the GP *that the treasure is buried here*. This clearly gets things wrong: the two pirates believe different things, and the second pirate meant to *say* that he believed something different. So the analysis I endorsed for (6) and (7) won't work here; but in Section 3.2, I will provide an analysis that does work.

Before turning to the issue of *de re* belief ascriptions, however, I want to respond to a possible objection to what I've said so far. The objection can be put in the following way:

> OK, so your view doesn't entail that in uttering their two tokens of (8), the two pirates have said that they believe the same thing. But your view does seem to lead to this sort of result in connection with (6) and (7). For instance, suppose that after our dentist utters (6), she continues to work on Lance, and finally finishes thirty minutes later, whereupon she utters a second token of (6). Your view entails that in uttering (6) again, the dentist has said that Lance believes *the very same thing* that she said he believed with her first utterance of (6). But this seems wrong.

Actually, I don't think it is wrong. Let's suppose that both utterances of (6) are true. Then at the time of the first utterance, Lance was in a certain belief state, B_1, and at the time of the second, he was in another, B_2. Now, intuitively, it seems plausible to say that at these two moments, Lance believed the "same thing" in one sense, and "different things" in another sense. The view I have in mind here allows us to save this intuition: at the two different moments, Lance believed a certain GP (namely, *that his root canal is over now*[16]), but this GP has indexical content, and because of this, it has different truth conditions in the two different contexts. But of course, the question we need to ask is what the two tokens of (6) are about; are they both about the same GP, or are they about the two different truth conditions? Well, it seems to me that there is good reason for thinking they're about the GP; for intuitively, the two utterances of (6) count as true if and only if Lance has the given belief *under the indexical concept now*. Even if he believes that his root canal is over at 4:00 (or 4:30, for the second utterance of (6)), if he doesn't believe that his root canal is *presently* ending, the belief ascription is false. Given this, it seems that the right thing

to say is that (a) the two utterances of (6) both say that Lance believes a certain indexical GP, and (b) this GP has different truth conditions (and indeed, different truth values) in the two different contexts.

3.2. *De Re Ascriptions*

I think that most belief ascriptions involving indexicals and names are *de re* and that they require an analysis different from the one I offered in the last section for (6) and (7); the view I will offer here is similar to the views developed by the early Kaplan (1968–1969) and Forbes (1987), but as we will see, my view is also importantly different from those views.

'*De re*' and '*de dicto*' are expressions that have been used to mean a number of different things. I do not want to claim that my use of these expressions is the *correct* one, i.e., that it marks the "real" *de re*/*de dicto* distinction, or even that my usage is standard (if there even is a standard usage here). I simply want to draw a distinction between two kinds of belief ascriptions, and I'm going to use '*de re*' and '*de dicto*' to do this, because I think that what I have in mind here is intimately connected to what's often been meant by those terms. But the real substance of my thesis is simply that (a) we do make belief ascriptions of the two kinds that I will describe (regardless of whether the two kinds ought to be called *de re* and *de dicto*), and (b) by noticing this, GPV-ists can solve the substitution/*de re* problem, i.e., the (3)–(4) problem.

The distinction that I want to draw is a distinction not between different kinds of beliefs, but between different kinds of belief *ascriptions*. It's not that some beliefs are *de re* whereas others are *de dicto*; it's rather that beliefs can be characterized in a *de re* way or a *de dicto* way. In a *de dicto* belief ascription, the speaker picks out a *particular* GP and says that the believer in question believes *that* proposition.[17] (Actually, this isn't quite right, because a belief ascription can be *de dicto* with respect to one expression within its 'that'-clause and *de re* with respect to another; I'll make this clearer in a moment, but in a nutshell, the idea is that a speaker can be precise about certain conceptual components within the GP and imprecise with respect to others.) This, I think, is what's (usually) going on when we say things like 'I believe that most bachelors are Canadian' (i.e., cases in which the 'that'-clause contains no names or indexicals), and I think it's what's going on with (6) and (7), i.e., cases involving essential uses of reflexive indexicals like 'here' and 'now'. (Again, this isn't quite right; I think that (6) is *de dicto* with respect to 'now' but *de re* with respect to 'his root canal'; but again, let's ignore this complication for now.) *De re* ascriptions, on the other hand, are very different. When we ascribe beliefs in this way, we do not pick out *particular* GPs. What we do is pick out

an *object* – in advance, so to speak, of the belief ascription – and then say that the believer in question believes *some GP or other* that (a) satisfies all of the various constraints inherent in the given belief ascription and (b) is about the object picked out in advance. In other words, so long as a GP preserves the right reference in the appropriate way (and so long as it satisfies certain other constraints to be discussed in a moment), it is *good enough*, relative to the given context.

Let me try to make this idea more precise. In *de re* belief ascriptions, we make claims of the form 'S believes that ...d ...' (or 'S believes of d that ...it ...', or something along these lines) where 'd' is a singular term that is being used to pick out an object in advance, so to speak, of the belief ascription. My proposal is that a belief ascription of this sort says something like this: S believes some general proposition X that satisfies the following three constraints:

(i) X is the sense of some sentence of the form '...b ...', i.e., some sentence that is exactly like the sentence '...d ...' that appeared in the original belief ascription, except that in place of 'd', it contains the singular term 'b', which *might* be different from 'd' and *might* have a different sense from 'd'. In other words, X is just like the proposition Y that is the sense of '...d ...', except that the constituent of X corresponding to 'b' might be distinct from the constituent of Y corresponding to 'd'.

(ii) 'b' is coreferential with 'd', relative to the given context.[18,19]

(iii) The sense of 'b' and the GP expressed by the sentence '...b ...' are *contextually appropriate* in the sense that they satisfy all of the specific constraints inherent in the given context. (What this amounts to will become clear below, but for now, I should note that it is this condition that sets my view of *de re* belief ascriptions apart from the views of Forbes and the early Kaplan.)

I will say that a GP that satisfies these three constraints, relative to a given context, is *de re good enough*, relative to that context.

Finally, it is important to note that belief ascriptions needn't be either "*de re* across the board" or "*de dicto* across the board". On the contrary, an ascription can be *de re* with respect to one expression and *de dicto* with respect to another. For example, an ascription of the form 'S believes that...d_1...d_2...d_3...' could be, say, *de re* with respect to d_1 and d_2 and *de dicto* with respect to d_3; i.e., it could be used to say something that is true iff S believes some (contextually appropriate) GP which is the sense of a sentence of the form '...b1...b2 ...d3...', i.e., a sentence just like the original sentence '...d_1...d_2...d_3...', except that 'b_1' and 'b_2' are

singular terms that might have different senses from 'd_1' and 'd_2' but are coreferential (in the given context) with 'd_1' and 'd_2', respectively.[20]

Let me clarify all of this by looking at an example of a *de re* ascription. To this end, consider again my utterance of

(3) Pat believes that Frank's neighbor is cheap.

We will see below that this utterance is *de re* with respect to the expression 'Frank's neighbor'. (One might wonder how this is actually to be determined, i.e., what the *mark* of a *de re* ascription is; I want to skip over this issue for a moment, but I will say quite a bit about it below.) If my utterance of (3) is *de re* with respect to 'Frank's neighbor', then in making this utterance, I am *not* saying that Pat believes the GP *that Frank's neighbor is cheap*; rather, I'm saying that Pat believes *some* (contextually appropriate) GP which is the sense of a sentence of the form 'b is cheap', where 'b' is a singular term that refers (in the given context) to Kelly. But Pat *does* believe a GP of this sort (recall that it was built into the example that while Pat is unaware that Kelly is Frank's neighbor, he does know Kelly and does believe that he's cheap); thus, my utterance of (3) comes out true on my view, which of course, is just what we want. (One might wonder what the "contextually appropriate" qualifier is doing in this account of what my utterance of (3) says; this is related to condition (iii); I will say more about this below.)[21]

Now let's take up the question of what determines whether a particular belief-ascription token is *de re* or *de dicto*. I claim that in the end, this is determined by the speaker's intention – similarly, I think, to how it's determined whether a definite-description token is attributive or referential. Thus, to *begin* with, we can say the following:

The Bottom Line: Suppose I utter 'X believes that p'; then this utterance is *de dicto* if it is built into the intended truth conditions of this utterance that in order for X to count as having the given belief, he or she must believe a specific GP – that is, X must believe that p under specific mental representations of the objects in question (i.e., the objects that are the referents of the expressions in 'p'); whereas if, in connection with one of the expressions in 'p', there is no such requirement concerning the representations under which X believes that p, then the ascription is *de re* with respect to that expression.

But more can be said than this, because (as with the attributive-referential distinction) there are some fairly clear conversational rules about when our belief ascriptions are *de re* and when they're *de dicto*. It seems to me that very often, or as a general rule, things go like this: (A) when the 'that'-clause in question contains indexicals or proper names, the ascription is *de re* with respect to those words, whereas (B) when it does not (when,

in contrast, it contains only words that have clear non-indexical meanings, e.g., words like 'bachelor'), the ascription is *de dicto*.

Now, there are exceptions to both (A) and (B), but before I discuss these, notice how, in "ordinary cases", or at least very often, (A) and (B) dovetail with the above *Bottom Line*. In connection with (B), notice that when people say things like 'Sam believes that all bachelors are tall', it is ordinarily assumed (by speakers and hearers) that in order for Sam to count as believing that all bachelors are tall, he must believe it under the concept *bachelor*. And note in particular that we standardly take this to be built into the *truth conditions* of such sentences: suppose, for instance, that there are only forty bachelors and that Sam happens to know all these people and happens to believe that they are all tall, without knowing that they're bachelors or that they're the only bachelors; we do not (in ordinary cases – though we could surely cook up an example where we would) take this as a condition that makes the sentence 'Sam believes that all bachelors are tall' true. Thus, (ordinary uses of) belief ascriptions like this are *de dicto*, in my sense of the term. In connection with (A), on the other hand, notice that when people say things like

(1) Tom believes that Ted Kennedy is tall,

or

(2) Tom believes of Ted Kennedy that he is tall,

it is not ordinarily intended (or understood, or assumed) that in order for Tom to count as having the given belief, he has to have it under some specific mental representation of Kennedy, e.g., one that corresponds to the sense of the name 'Ted Kennedy' or the word 'he'. Indeed, under normal circumstances, it won't even be required that Tom knows that Kennedy's name is 'Ted Kennedy', or that he is male; (1) could be true, even if Tom thinks of Kennedy as *the youngest Kennedy brother, whose first name I can never remember*, and (2) could be true, even if he thinks of Kennedy as *the woman standing in front of me*. Thus, (1) is *de re* with respect to 'Ted Kennedy', and (2) is *de re* with respect to 'he'. (It is worth noting here that on my view, (1) and (2) have (or at least, *can* have, depending on context) the same truth conditions; both are true iff Tom believes some (contextually appropriate) GP which is the sense of a sentence of the form 'b is tall', where 'b' is a singular term that refers (in the given context) to Ted Kennedy. But because of the 'contextually appropriate' qualifier, a given utterance of (1) could have different truth conditions from a given utterance of (2); I will say more about this qualifier below, and when I do,

the present point will become clearer. For now, though, I simply want to point out that while tokens of (1) can differ semantically from tokens of (2), on my view, no such difference follows from the difference in their forms.)

But again, there are exceptions to (A) and (B). The most obvious exceptions to (B) are generated by referential uses of definite descriptions within 'that'-clauses. An obvious example of this is (3). In uttering this sentence, I am clearly using the expression 'Frank's neighbor' referentially; for if (unbeknownst to me) Kelly has moved out and Ralph Macchio has moved in next to Frank, my utterance of 'Frank's neighbor' still refers to Kelly and not to Macchio. And it is just as obvious that my utterance of (3) is *de re* with respect to 'Frank's neighbor', for there is clearly no intention or assumption here that in order for Pat to count as having the belief in question, he has to represent Kelly in some specific way, e.g., a way that corresponds to the sense of 'Frank's neighbor'.

The most obvious exceptions to (A), on the other hand, are generated by cases involving essential uses of certain reflexive indexicals. This, I think, is what's going on in (6). As we've seen, in order for (6) to be true, Lance has to have the given belief under an *indexical* representation of the given time – in particular, under the concept *the present time*. Even if Lance believes that his root canal is (or was or will be) over at 4:00 p.m., if he doesn't believe that his root canal is *presently* ending, then we would not count (6) as true; in order for (6) to be true, Lance has to employ the indexical concept *now* in his thinking. Thus, (6) is *de dicto* with respect to 'now'. Similar remarks apply to (7) and the word 'here'. But I do not think that all belief ascriptions involving 'here' and 'now' are *de dicto*; in particular, belief ascriptions involving non-essential uses of 'here' and 'now' are ordinarily *de re* with respect to those words. A good example of this is the case of the two pirates pointing at two different spots and uttering two different tokens of

(8) I believe that the treasure is buried here.

These utterances of (8) are clearly *de re* with respect to 'here', for it is not built into the truth conditions of these utterances that in order for the pirates to count as having the beliefs in question, they must have them under specific representations of the given spots, e.g., representations that correspond to the sense of the word 'here'.

(One might think that we also get exceptions to (A) when we use certain non-reflexive indexicals as Castañedian quasi-indicators. Consider, e.g., an utterance of

(6′) At 4:00 p.m., Lance believed that his root canal was over then (at that precise time).

One might think that (6′) is *de dicto* with respect to 'then (at that precise time)', for one might think that (6′) ascribes to Lance the same belief that (6) does – so that the expression 'then (at that precise time)' is being used to pick out the concept *now* in a *de dicto* sort of way.)

All of these remarks provide some progress toward specifying what kinds of belief-ascription tokens are *de re* with respect to what kinds of expressions. But again, in the end, this is determined by the speaker's intention, by how much he or she is assuming, or meaning to indicate, about what the believer's representations of the objects in question must be like in order for the believer to count as having the given belief. And I claim that as native speakers and hearers of belief ascriptions, we're pretty good at knowing what people mean by their belief ascriptions. We're just as good at this, I think, as we are at detecting when someone is using a definite description referentially, or an indexical essentially.

Let's move on now to condition (iii). So far, I haven't said much about this condition, because it doesn't play a very important or obvious role in connection with belief ascriptions like (2) and (3). We will see below that it is still relevant there, even if it's not immediately obvious, but first, I want to discuss a case where it plays a more obvious and crucial role, a case that seems to refute what I will call the (i)–(ii) view, i.e., the view that endorses (i) and (ii) but not (iii). Suppose that the Superman story is true and that I have two pictures in front of me, one of Superman (i.e., one of Superman/Clark Kent wearing blue tights, a cape, and so on) and one of Clark Kent (wearing horn-rimmed glasses, a suit, and so on). And now suppose that I point at the first picture and say

(9) Lois believes that he flies,

and then immediately after this, I point at the second picture and say

(10) But Lois doesn't believe that he flies.

Now, intuitively, it seems that both of these utterances are true.[22] But if (10) is true, then this raises a problem for the (i)–(ii) view. It seems that my utterance of (10) is *de re* with respect to 'he'. Thus, according to the

(i)–(ii) view, this utterance is true iff Lois doesn't believe any GP which is the sense of a sentence of the form 'b flies', where 'b' is a singular term that refers (in the present context) to Clark Kent (or equivalently, to Superman). But since Lois believes that Superman flies, she does believe a GP of this sort, and so according to the (i)–(ii) view, my utterance of (10) comes out *false* – which, of course, is not what we want.

If we endorse condition (iii), in addition to (i) and (ii), we can avoid this problem entirely. According to this view, i.e., the (i)–(iii) view, my utterance of (10) is true iff Lois doesn't believe any *contextually appropriate* GP which is the sense of a sentence of the form 'b flies', where 'b' is a singular term that refers (in the given context) to Clark Kent. Thus, my view will deliver the desired result that (10) is true, so long as the GPs that Lois believes here – e.g., *that the cute guy named 'Superman' flies, that the man of steel flies*, and so on – are not contextually appropriate, i.e., *don't count* in the context of (10), or *aren't relevant* in the context of (10). But it seems to me easy to see that this is indeed the case, i.e., that these GPs *aren't* relevant in the context in which I uttered (10). The relevant features of this context are as follows: I know that Superman and Clark Kent are one and the same person, and I am assuming that my hearers (as normal, informed members of our culture) also know this; I am either (a) elaborating on the fact (which I assume my hearers to be aware of) that Lois is ignorant about the identity of Superman and Clark Kent, or else (b) using my utterances of (9) and (10) to communicate this fact about Lois to my hearers; either way, I am clearly using the two pictures to distinguish Lois's "Superman-type beliefs" (i.e., the beliefs she has about Superman/Clark Kent in connection with her Superman-type representations) from her "Clark-type beliefs". Thus, since this is clearly what I'm *doing* when I utter (10), it is clear that in the context of this utterance, any "Superman-type beliefs" that Lois might have are *not relevant*, i.e., *don't count*. Or in the terminology of my theory, (10) comes out true, because Lois doesn't believe any GP that's *de re* good enough, relative to the given context, because none of the GPs that she believes here satisfy condition (iii). The only GPs that would satisfy condition (iii) and qualify as *de re* good enough, relative to this context, are GPs that Lois clearly doesn't believe – e.g., *that Clark Kent flies*, or *that the wormy guy who works in the next cubicle flies*. So again, on my view, my utterance of (10) comes out true, which of course, is just what we want.

The strategy that I am using here to salvage our intuitions about the substitution failure involved in (9) and (10) is similar to some strategies that have been used by philosophers with "SPV-ist leanings", e.g., Crimmins and Perry (1989) and Richard (1990). These philosophers have created

theories which are essentially SPV-ist in spirit but which are, nonetheless, capable of accounting for cases involving substitution failures. Now, these two SPV-esque views are different from one another in important ways, but they would both account for the simultaneous truth of my utterances of (9) and (10) by maintaining that there are facts about the *contexts* of these utterances that make it the case that the two utterances are not talking about one and the same belief structure in Lois's head and are, hence, not contradicting one another. And this is essentially what I am saying as well. Moreover, this stance just seems intuitively pleasing; it just seems *right* to say that when we ascribe beliefs to people, facts about context can be relevant to determining what the people in question are being said to believe. (It is important to note that despite this similarity, my view is importantly different from the views of Crimmins and Perry and Richard – and from other views of this general kind, e.g., the hidden-indexical theory suggested by Schiffer (1977) and the quasi-singular proposition view suggested by Schiffer (1978) and developed by Recanati (1993). The most important difference in the present context is that these other views are *SPV-esque* views – i.e., they maintain that when a 'that'-clause contains a proper name or an indexical, it denotes a proposition that contains as a constituent (or a constituent of a constituent) the actual referent of the given name or indexical. In Section 4, I say a few words about one of the reasons why I favor my view over these SPV-esque views.)

I now want to explain why I think my view is superior to the views of Forbes and the early Kaplan, who endorse (i) and (ii) but not (iii). There are two arguments here: first, my view provides a better solution to the (9)–(10) problem, and so it gives us a better view of *de re* belief ascriptions in particular; and second, because I endorse the (i)–(iii) view of *de re* ascriptions in conjunction with the view of *de dicto* ascriptions outlined in Section 3.1, my view is better overall. The second argument here is just that without the analysis of Section 3.1, we will not have an adequate account of sentences like (6) and (7) – though I might also add here that the *de dicto* analysis of Section 3.1 gives me a solution to a problem that the early Kaplan struggled with, namely, the problem of the shortest spy.[23] What I want to do here, though, is develop the first argument, i.e., the argument for the thesis that my view delivers a better solution to the (9)–(10) problem than do the views of Forbes and the early Kaplan.

Let's begin with Forbes. In order to solve the problem with (9) and (10), Forbes would retreat from the (i)–(ii) view for such ascriptions and fall back into a traditional Fregean view (i.e., a view like the ones advocated by Peacocke and Evans), claiming that the 'that'-clauses in (9) and (10) denote *particular* GPs that are *different* from one another. Fregeans can

do this by claiming that the two occurrences of 'he' in (9) and (10) are associated with particular modes of presentation that are different from one another and specific to these particular utterances of 'he'. For instance, one might claim that in (9), the sense of 'he' is *Superman*, or *the man of steel*, or some "gestalt" or "pictorial" mode of presentation of Superman/Clark Kent wearing blue tights, a cape, and so on, whereas in (10), the sense of 'he' is *Clark Kent*, or *the wormy guy who works in the next cubicle*, or some gestalt or pictorial mode of presentation of Superman/Clark Kent wearing horn-rimmed glasses, a suit, and so on. Thus, according to this traditional Fregean view, the word 'he' is associated with different senses in (9) and (10), and so these two belief ascriptions pick out different GPs. Now, of course, the actual words appearing in the 'that'-clauses of (9) and (10) are identical, so Fregeans who take this line think that the different GPs picked out by my utterances of (9) and (10) are determined by *context*. Thus, this view, like my view, uses context to solve the problem of (9) and (10). But this view forces context to do much more work than it has to do on my view, and indeed, it seems to me that it forces context to do (I) more work than it's *capable* of doing and (II) more work than our semantic intuitions dictate that it *ought* to be doing.

To appreciate these points, note first that the traditional Fregean view forces context to pick out *unique* GPs for (9) and (10) to be about. Now note, in connection with point (I), that there is no way that the contexts of my utterances of (9) and (10) could do this, because there are numerous GPs that are equally good candidates here, and there is nothing inherent in these contexts that points to any one of them. For instance, the context of my utterance of (9) seems wholly neutral between the GPs *that the man of steel flies* and *that the cute guy named 'Superman' flies* (and the same goes for gestalt and pictorial modes of presentation – the context here is incapable of picking out a unique such mode of presentation). Finally, in connection with point (II), note that our semantic intuitions dictate that (9) and (10) just *aren't* about unique GPs: first of all, when I utter (9), I probably don't even have a unique GP in mind; but even if I do (even if I'm thinking of, say, the GP *that the man of steel flies*), we don't think that in uttering (9) I have *said* that Lois believes this GP, and most importantly, we don't think this is part of the truth conditions of (9); i.e., if Lois doesn't believe this GP but does believe the GP *that the cute guy named 'Superman' flies*, we would still treat (9) as true. One wants to say here: "It doesn't matter; any of these GPs will do". And it's for precisely this reason that it's implausible to suppose that my utterance of (9) is about some particular *one* of them.

And, of course, this is where my view comes in: it lumps together all the GPs that "will do" here; it tells us that in uttering (9), I merely say that Lois believes at least one of these GPs. And moreover, context has to do very little work here: all it has to do is separate off the GPs that "will do" form those that won't do – i.e., from those that are "inappropriate", or not *de re* good enough. And in contrast to the traditional Fregean view, my view is asking context to do something that (I′) it *can* do, and (II′) dovetails with our semantic intuitions. Point (I′) is, I think, pretty obvious: context *has* to be capable of doing what I'm saying it can do, for otherwise, people wouldn't be able to understand what I meant in uttering (9) and (10). I take it as obvious that anyone who witnessed my utterances of (9) and (10) (and who knows the Superman story) would instantly understand that I meant to distinguish Lois's "Superman-type beliefs" from her "Clark-type beliefs". But people could figure this out only by making use of context, for the *words* in (9) and (10) simply don't do it. And point (II′) is equally clear: intuitively, we think that (9) is true if and only if Lois believes that Superman/Clark Kent flies under some "Superman-type" representation of this man, and that (10) is true if and only if she doesn't believe that he flies under any "Clark-type" representation of this man.

Let's turn now to the early Kaplan. He would solve the (9)–(10) problem by reading (10) as saying something like this:

(11) There is a name α such that (a) α denotes Superman, and (b) α is what Kaplan calls a *vivid* name that is *of* Superman for Lois, and (c) Lois doesn't believe 'α flies'.[24]

This is an intuitively pleasing analysis of the truth of (10), because in fact, there *is* a name in Lois's psychology that fits the description of α – namely, 'Clark Kent'. But the problem is that if we change the example, this analysis won't work. Suppose that Lois's sister, Tracy, knows of Superman but has no knowledge whatsoever of his Clark Kent persona. Then one could utter sentences like (9) and (10) about Tracy, and intuitively, these would be just as obviously true as (9) and (10) are. But the sort of analysis given in (11) won't work for these new sentences, for since Tracy doesn't know about the Clark Kent persona, there is no name in her psychology that fits the description of α.

Finally, I return to a point to which I promised above that I would return. Why didn't I have to say anything about condition (iii) in my discussions of (2) and (3)? The reason is that the contexts of those utterances don't seem to place any substantive constraints on what would count as an appropriate GP. Now, I do not want to suggest that condition (iii) is *empty* in these cases; for it may be that there are certain sufficiently "bizarre"

ways of representing Ted Kennedy and Frank's neighbor about which our intuitions would say: "If Tom and Pat have the beliefs mentioned in (2) and (3) only in *those* ways, then that hardly counts as making (2) and (3) true". My own view is that, indeed, there are some ways of representing Ted Kennedy and Frank's neighbor that "wouldn't count" in connection with (2) and (3); but I don't need to commit to this here; in the present context, I just want to leave the possibility open. In general, I want to say that the constraints that condition (iii) places on the GPs that would count as making a given belief ascription true – i.e., the constraints that *context* imposes here – will vary from case to case: sometimes there will be quite strong constraints, and other times there will be weaker ones (and perhaps there will be some cases with no constraints, i.e., an empty constraint). And this is just a piece of a much larger point, namely, that the fine-grainedness of our belief ascriptions varies. Condition (iii) enables us to increase the fine-grainedness of an ascription without moving to a completely precise *de dicto* ascription, i.e., without having to go out on any limb about any particular GP. In other words, conditions (i) and (ii) deliver an initial set of GPs that could end up being "*de re* good enough", and condition (iii), i.e., context, pares this set down, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the nature of the context in question.[25]

3.3. *Proper Names and Some More Alleged Problems with GPV*

In this section, I want to address Kripke's 'London'–'*Londres*' puzzle, as well as the two worries about the senses of proper names that I mentioned at the end of Section 2. Before I do any of this, however, I want to point out that my view handles substitution failures involving proper names in the same way that it handles substitution failures involving indexicals – i.e., in the same way that it handles the (9)–(10) problem. If I utter

(4) Lois believes that Superman flies but doesn't believe that Clark Kent flies,

most GPV-ists would say that the reason this is true is that Lois believes the GP *that Superman flies* but doesn't believe the GP *that Clark Kent flies*. But I have a different view. I think that this utterance of (4) is *de re* with respect to 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' and that context places restrictions on what Lois's representations would have to be like in order to satisfy the two belief ascriptions in (4). The contextual features that do this are exactly the same ones that do it in connection with (9) and (10): I am assuming that my hearers (as normal, informed members of our culture) know that Superman and Clark Kent are one and the same person, and I am using

the names 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' to distinguish Lois's "Superman-type beliefs" from her "Clark-type beliefs". Thus, since this is what I'm doing when I utter (4), it is clear that in the context of this utterance, any "Superman-type beliefs" that Lois might have are not relevant to – i.e., don't count in connection with – the second half of (4). So on my view, my utterance of (4) is true for the same reason that my utterances of (9) and (10) are both true.

I think that my view here is superior to the traditional Fregean view of belief ascriptions involving proper names; my argument against the Fregean view is similar to my argument against the Fregean view of belief ascriptions involving indexicals (see Section 3.2 for that argument). To say just a few words here, the traditional Fregean view holds that ordinary belief ascriptions involving proper names pick out *unique* GPs, but our intuitions dictate that such belief ascriptions are not about unique GPs – e.g., it seems that (a) there are numerous GPs that Lois could believe that would all count as making the first half of (4) true, and (b) there is no single GP which is such that if Lois doesn't believe *that* GP, then the first half of (4) is false. Thus, for instance, Katz thinks that the first half of (4) says that Lois believes the unique GP *that the contextually determined bearer of 'Superman' flies*; but this is just false – the first half of (4) could be true even if Lois doesn't know that Superman's name is 'Superman' (and in general, sentences of the form 'S believes that n is F' can be true even if S doesn't know that n is a bearer of 'n').[26]

I now want to show how my view provides an intuitively pleasing solution to Kripke's (1979) 'London'–'*Londres*' puzzle. In this case, Pierre (a Frenchman living in London who does not realize that 'London' is a translation of the French name '*Londres*') sincerely assents to both '*Londres est Jolie*' and 'London is not pretty'. The puzzle is that all of the following seem true: (a) Pierre believes that London is pretty; (b) Pierre believes that London is not pretty; and (c) while Pierre is certainly ignorant of an important fact about 'London' and '*Londres*', he does not hold contradictory beliefs here. My view allows us to say that (a)–(c) *really are* true. First of all, the belief ascriptions in (a) and (b) come out true on my view, for they seem to be *de re* with respect to 'London', and Pierre does believe GPs of the right kinds here; that is, he believes GPs which are senses of sentences of the form 'b1 is pretty' and 'b2 is not pretty', where 'b_1' and 'b_2' are singular terms that refer (in the appropriate contexts) to London, and in ordinary cases – i.e., ordinary utterances of the belief ascriptions in (a) and (b) – these GPs would be contextually appropriate, i.e., there would not be any contextual features that rule out the GPs that Pierre believes here as irrelevant. So again, on my view, the belief ascriptions

in (a) and (b) come out true. But it does not follow from this that on my view, Pierre holds contradictory beliefs here, and in fact, he clearly doesn't. There is no single GP here which is such that Pierre believes both it and its negation. Consider, for instance, the GP *that the contextually determined bearer of 'London' is not pretty*; Pierre may or may not believe this GP, but he certainly doesn't believe its negation.

(Note, too, that similar remarks apply to Kripke's Paderewski puzzle: for reasons analogous to those given in connection with the London case, my view delivers the desired result that (a′) 'Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent' is true, and (b′) 'Peter believes that Paderewski had no musical talent' is also true, and yet (c′) while Peter is certainly ignorant of an important fact about Paderewski, he does not hold contradictory beliefs here.)

The last point I want to make in this section is that by endorsing the Burge-Katz view of the senses of proper names – i.e., the view that the sense of a name 'N' is the concept *the contextually determined bearer of 'N'* – GPV-ists can avoid the two worries about the senses of proper names mentioned at the end of Section 2. Consider, first, the worry that different people will often associate different senses with the same name. As Richard (1990) has shown, this is a very serious problem for Fregean GPV-ists. But once we reject the idea that senses are "modes of presentation" and adopt the Burge-Katz view of the senses of proper names, this problem just disappears. For according to this view, every proper name has a unique sense. (Of course, different people will still have different representations of, say, Aristotle, and indeed, on my view, these representations will be relevant to the actual GPs that people believe about Aristotle – for on my view, people don't usually represent Aristotle as *the contextually determined bearer of 'Aristotle'*. But as long as we endorse the Burge-Katz view, these differing representations of Aristotle will not be the sense of 'Aristotle'.)

As for the Kripkean worry about the content of the descriptions that might serve as the senses of proper names, since the Burge-Katz theory maintains that the sense of a name 'N' contains no substantive information about the referent of 'N' (other than that it is a bearer of 'N'), this theory is supposed to be susceptible to the second horn of Kripke's dilemma; that is, the Burge-Katz theory is supposed to fail because the senses it assigns to names fail to fix the referents of those names. But on the Burge-Katz theory, the sense of a name isn't *supposed* to determine reference; on this view, reference is determined not by sense alone, but by sense and context together.[27]

4. A QUICK ARGUMENT AGAINST SPV-ESQUE STRATEGIES

In Section 2, I raised some problems for traditional versions of SPV and GPV. Then in Section 3, I developed a non-traditional version of GPV and argued that it can solve the problems raised in Section 2. But as we have seen, there are also some SPV-esque philosophers (e.g., the early Schiffer, Crimmins and Perry, Richard, and Recanati) who pursue the same strategy, i.e., who admit that traditional SPV cannot handle all of the problem cases and who try to solve the problems by developing non-traditional versions of SPV. Moreover, as we saw, my view is similar to some of the non-traditional versions of SPV in that I use some similar strategies in accounting for some of the problem cases. (One might say that my view stands to traditional GPV in a way that is similar to the ways in which some of the non-traditional versions of SPV stand to traditional SPV.)

So given this, our next question ought to be whether there are any good arguments that settle the dispute between new-and-improved GPV and new-and-improved SPV. I believe that there are. For I believe that there are some very traditional arguments that suggest that (any version of) GPV is superior to (any version of) SPV. It is not the purpose of this paper to develop these arguments in detail, but I would like to say just a few words about one argument strategy here. The argument I have in mind is the old argument from vacuity. Thus, for instance, if Emily is a five-year-old child with a standard set of "five-year-old-child Santa Claus beliefs", then it seems that we can accurately describe her by saying: 'Emily believes that Santa Claus is fat'. This seems to be a straightforwardly true claim about Emily. But it seems to follow from SPV (and the new-and-improved SPV-esque views of people like Crimmins and Perry and Richard) that because there is no such person as Santa, there is no such thing as the proposition that Santa is fat. Thus, SPV seems to entail that the above belief ascription about Emily is in fact not true because its 'that'-clause is a vacuous singular term; that is, it seems to entail that it's not the case that Emily believes that Santa Claus is fat. But this result is highly counterintuitive; intuitively, it seems that Emily does believe that Santa is fat, and it seems that the above belief ascription *says* that she believes this. Thus, SPV-esque views seem to fly in the face of our semantic intuitions here. They do not accurately capture the meanings that *we* attach to our words. Thus, it seems that no SPV-esque theory could be the correct semantic theory for *our* language. (And it would be implausible to respond by claiming that when we say things like 'Emily believes that Santa is fat', we're doing something different from what we're doing when we say things like 'Emily believes that Clinton is a man'; for (a) it is easy to imagine a case in which the

speaker *also* believes in Santa Claus and intends the belief ascription to be understood in the standard way, and (b) in such a case, the belief ascription would still seem true.)

In contrast to this, I think it can be argued that my version of GPV can handle this case. Traditional GPV handles this case very easily; for since GPs are made up of concepts, or senses, and not actual objects, there do exist GPs such as *that Santa is fat*, *that the chubby gift-giver in red is fat*, and so on. Thus, according to traditional GPV, there is no problem with the above belief ascription about Emily – it can be straightforwardly true, because even though 'Santa' is vacuous, 'that Santa is fat' is not vacuous. (Of course, since there is no Santa Claus, it follows that what Emily believes is not true, but this is just what we want – what she believes really isn't true. The problem with SPV is that it entails that the above belief ascription about Emily is also not true, whereas intuitively, it seems that it is true.) The problem is a bit trickier for my version of GPV, though. If it could be maintained that 'Emily believes that Santa is fat' is *de dicto*, then I could say just what traditional GPV-ists say; but I think it's implausible to suppose that this ascription is *de dicto*. Thus, what I would need to do, in order to solve the problem of vacuous names, is generalize my account of *de re* ascriptions so that it covers cases involving vacuous names. The only change that would need to be made would be in clause (ii) – i.e., the clause demanding coreferentiality; in particular, instead of saying that 'b' and 'd' are coreferential, I would need to define a kind of coreferentiality, or pseudo-coreferentiality, that applies to vacuous names, and say something like this:

(ii′) Either (1) 'b' and 'd' are both non-vacuous and they are coreferential, relative to the given context; or else (2) 'b' and 'd' are both vacuous and they are pseudo-coreferential, relative to the given context.

Some thought would have to be put into the question of how best to define pseudo-coreferentiality, but the basic idea is straightforward: 'Santa Claus' and 'Kris Kringle' count as pseudo-coreferential, whereas 'Santa Claus' and 'Vulcan' do not, because it is built into ordinary-language usage and intentions that 'Santa Claus' and 'Kris Kringle' are "*supposed to*" pick out the same person, or that they pick out the same person if anything at all, or something along these lines.

I do not want to pretend that these brief remarks refute SPV. For aside from the fact that one might press me on my own view of 'that'-clauses involving vacuous names, there are various ways that SPV-ists might try to respond to the worry about vacuity. For instance, David Braun (1993) lays out two SPV-ist views of vacuous names, and Nathan Salmon (1998) lays out another. The first Braun view is a sort of bite-the-bullet view

that simply embraces the conclusion that sentences containing vacuous names say nothing and tries to make this palatable; the second Braun view (inspired by a footnote in Kaplan (1989)) is that sentences containing vacuous names express *unfulfilled* propositions, or *gappy* propositions – i.e., propositions that do not have components where there, so to speak, "should be" components; and the Salmon view is that sentences containing vacuous names express propositions that don't exist but nonetheless have properties (e.g., they can be true, or believed by Emily). I think there are problems with all of these views, but I cannot pursue this here, and so I do not want to claim that I have shown in this paper that GPV is superior to SPV. To repeat what I said at the outset, the aim of this paper is not to establish that GPV is true, but merely to defend it against objections – or more specifically, to show how one version of GPV can account for various phenomena that many people have thought inexplicable from a GPV-esque perspective.

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NOTES

[1] In addition to (a) and (b), I think it can also be argued that (c) when we do turn to do philosophy of semantics (and mathematics and physics and so on), it turns out that by helping ourselves in these disciplines to expressions that purportedly refer to abstract objects, we do *not* commit ourselves to believing in the existence of such objects, because we can take these expressions to be useful fictions. This is a more controversial thesis than (a) or (b), but I have argued for it at length elsewhere (1998a; 1998b, Chap. 7).

[2] In connection with some views, the two questions are equivalent, but in connection with my view, they're not; for as we'll see, my view entails that for *some* belief ascriptions of the form 'S believes that p', the 'that'-clause doesn't refer to a unique GP, but yet the ascription is still making a claim about GPs.

[3] See, e.g., Schiffer (1977, 1978), Crimmins and Perry (1989), Richard (1990), and Recanati (1993).

[4] See Kaplan (1989), Salmon (1986), and Richard (1990).

[5] I take this case from Perry (1979).

[6] David Pitt (2001) has argued that 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' really aren't coreferential terms, that they refer to distinct alter egos of the Kryptonian Kal El. If he's right, this wouldn't undermine my point here, because I could just change the example to one

involving two names that really are coreferential. e.g., 'Mark Twain' and 'Sam Clemens'. For our purposes here, we can just assume that Superman is Clark Kent.

[7] A similar problem arises in connection with what Castañeda (1968) calls quasi-indicators. Suppose that after the root canal is over, Lance's dentist utters

(6′) At 4:00 p.m., Lance believed that his root canal was over then (at that precise time).

If the expression 'then (at that precise time)' is functioning here as a Castañedian quasi-indicator, then this utterance of (6′) ascribes to Lance the same belief that (6) does. Thus, one might object to GPV by saying: "(6′) could be true even if, in having this belief, Lance didn't employ any general concept (i.e., any Fregean sense) that picked out 4:00 p.m. and, hence, didn't believe any GP".

[8] See Kripke (1972).

[9] See Perry (1997, 348). He points out that if you see an inscription of 'David uses LISP', then even if you have no idea which David is being denoted here, you still have access to what he calls the *reflexive content* of the inscription (which, for Perry, is distinct from the proposition expressed, the latter being the relevant SP); the reflexive content is this: there is a person x and a convention C such that (i) C is exploited by the given inscription of 'David uses LISP', (ii) C dictates that 'David' is a name of x, and (iii) x uses LISP. It seems to me that this content is essentially equivalent to the GP *that the contextually determined bearer of 'David' uses LISP*.

[10] Katz (1990) endorses a similar view of the relationship between sense and reference.

[11] See, e.g., Frege (1919) and Salmon (2003).

[12] I use the term 'reflexive indexical' to pick out words like 'I', 'here', and 'now', i.e., words that, in some appropriate sense, relate to the speaker's own person, time, place, etc. Non-reflexive indexicals are words like 'she', 'there', 'then', and 'that', i.e., words that, in some appropriate sense, relate to other persons, places, times, objects, and so on.

[13] Bach (1994) has endorsed a view that's reminiscent of Kaplan's view (i.e., the character-plus-context-yields-proposition view) in connection with what he calls semantically indeterminate sentences – e.g., 'Tipper is ready', which according to Bach, is semantically indeterminate because it doesn't say what Tipper is ready *for*. On Bach's view, sentences like this fail to determine propositions and only determine *propositional radicals*, though in a context, they can express full propositions. I should note here that I would *not* say that ordinary belief ascriptions involving this sort of semantic indeterminacy – e.g., 'Al believes that Tipper is ready' – say that the believer in question believes the Bachian propositional radical. Instead, I think that ordinarily, the context of the belief ascription helps determine what the believer in question (in this case, Al) is being said to believe. I won't pursue this idea in detail, however, because I think this issue is more or less independent of the questions I'm trying to answer here.

[14] This is not strictly correct. In Section 3.2, I am going to talk about belief ascriptions being *de re* and *de dicto* with respect to certain expressions that appear in their 'that'-clauses. I think that (6) is *de dicto* with respect to 'now' but *de re* with respect to 'his root canal'. So the remarks in the text are just supposed to be about what's going on in (6) with the word 'now'. By ignoring the fact that (6) is *de re* with respect to 'his root canal', I am merely simplifying things in order to convey my view about this occurrence of 'now'; what I would really say about (6) will become clear in Section 3.2.

[15] Note that I have not taken a stand here on the question of whether cases involving the reflexive indexical 'I' are *de dicto* or *de re*; I will say a few words about this in note 25.

[16] Again, this isn't quite right; see note 14.

[17] Let me clarify what I mean by 'pick out' here by explaining how my notion of a *de dicto* ascription differs from Crimmins's (1995) notion of a *notionally specific* ascription. Crimmins's term applies when the speaker *refers to* a unique mental representation in the believer's head; as he points out, we can do this without saying much of anything about what the corresponding GP is; e.g., if I say "John has only one representation of Bill, and he employs it in believing that Bill is tall", then (arguably) I have referred to John's representation of Bill without saying *how* John represents Bill. Likewise, it seems possible to refer to a GP without saying much to characterize it. But according to my usage, in order for a belief ascription to be *de dicto*, it has to *characterize*, and not just refer to, a specific GP.

[18] If we wanted to hang on to the traditional Fregean principle that words inside 'that'-clauses refer to their customary senses, then strictly speaking, we would say not that 'b' and 'd' are coreferential in the *given* context, but that they are coreferential in transparent contexts that are "appropriately similar" to the given context, or something like this. But GPV-ists needn't hang on to the traditional Fregean principle if they don't want to. One could maintain that while (*de dicto* uses of) 'that'-clauses refer to GPs that are composed of the senses of the words inside the clause, these words themselves still have their customary references. By taking this line, one would give up on the principle that the reference of a complex expression is always a function of its syntax and the references of its parts; but it's not clear that there's anything wrong with this – after all, one could still maintain that the reference of a (*de dicto* use of a) 'that'-clause is determined *compositionally*, for it would still be a function of its syntax and the *senses* of its parts. I won't take a stand on this issue here, but for the sake of clarity and simplicity, I will speak as if words inside 'that'-clauses retain their customary references; thus, on this usage, condition (ii) in the text can stand as it is, for 'b' and 'd' can be coreferential in the *given* context, even if they're not synonymous.

[19] In Section 4, I suggest that in the end, clause (ii) might have to be altered a bit – in particular, that it might have to be generalized in a certain way to account for *de re* belief ascriptions involving vacuous names – but for now, we can ignore this.

[20] Castañeda (1989) makes a similar point; that is, he allows for sentences that (on my terminology) are partially *de re* and partially *de dicto*, although he uses a different terminology and, indeed, has an entirely different theoretical framework.

[21] One might worry about the fact that I have abandoned compositionality here. But I am doing this only in connection with *tokens*. A semantic theory of English *types* will still be purely compositional on my view. For since types aren't embedded in any contexts, we have no choice but to treat belief-ascription types along *de dicto* lines, i.e., as being about specific GPs. And this is true of *all* belief-ascription types, even those that contain non-reflexive indexicals, e.g., 'John believes that she is smart'; as a sentence *type*, this ascription says that John believes the GP *that she is smart*, though as we will see, ordinary tokens of this sentence would be *de re* and, hence, say something else. So we will still have a compositional semantic theory for English sentence types; we won't have such a theory for tokens, but this should not be surprising – the meanings of our tokens just *are* context dependent, i.e., they're not wholly determined by semantic rules.

[22] SPV-ists might claim that (10) is false, but no one who wasn't in the grip of SPV would say this. Pretheoretic intuition treats (10) as obviously true. Thus, all else being equal, it would be preferable to save this intuition.

[23] Consider the sentence

(S) Ralph believes that the shortest spy is a spy.

We don't want our theory of belief ascriptions to lead to the result that (S) entails

(Q) There is a person such that Ralph believes that he or she is a spy.

Now, on my view, utterances of (S) in which the expression 'the shortest spy' isn't being used referentially are *de dicto*; in particular, they say that Ralph believes the GP *that there exists a person who is a spy and who is shorter than all other spies and who is a spy*, or some such thing; but on this reading, (S) doesn't entail (Q), and so there is no problem. On the other hand, utterances of (S) in which 'the shortest spy' *is* being used referentially are *de re*, and my view does lead to the result that such tokens of (S) entail (Q); but such tokens of (S) really *do* entail (Q), and so again, there is no problem here.

[24] This view is suggested by the discussion in Kaplan (1968–1969), Section XI.

[25] I have purposely avoided saying anything about cases involving 'I'. Suppose I utter

(12) I believe that I'm a millionaire.

There are two views I could adopt here. First, I could say that (12) is *de dicto*. Here's an argument for this: if I believe that Johnson's oldest son is a millionaire, and if, unbeknownst to me, I am Johnson's oldest son, this would not make (12) true; it seems that in order for (12) to be true, I must have this belief under an "I-type representation" of myself. Note, though, that if (12) is *de dicto*, the GP it picks out does not have as a constituent the sense of 'I', i.e., the concept *the present speaker*; for (a) we humans just don't go around representing ourselves as *the present speaker*, and (b) our belief ascriptions don't say that we do. Thus, if (12) is *de dicto*, then the GP it picks out must contain some other concept; perhaps we can say that it contains a primitive I-concept, or me-concept, or some such thing. One could avoid this, however, by maintaining that (12) is *de re* with respect to 'I' and that the reason the above Johnson scenario wouldn't make (12) true is that condition (iii) places serious restrictions on how I would have to represent myself (in connection with the belief mentioned in (12)) in order for (12) to be true – but that (12) does not pick out a *unique* GP that I must believe. Note, though, that in contrast to (10), what's driving the condition-(iii) restrictions on (12) here isn't features of this specific context, but rather, something like conversational rules that are operative in all contexts involving ordinary uses of 'I' in belief ascriptions. I will not take a stand here on the question of whether cases like (12) are *de dicto* or *de re*.

[26] Let a BPN be a belief ascription with a proper name in its 'that'-clause. What the argument in the text shows is that Katz does not have the right theory of BPN *tokens*. But as a theory of BPN *types*, I think Katz's theory is true.

[27] By the way, while I maintain that names have senses, everything I've said here is consistent with a Kripkean baptism-causal-chain theory of how names come to be associated with objects. And it's also consistent with the thesis that *tokens* of names are rigid designators. If I say 'Aristotle was fond of dogs', referring to the Greek philosopher, then this utterance is true in all worlds in which that philosopher is fond of dogs. For the context of this utterance is in *this* world, and so its reference is fixed in this world. By claiming that 'Aristotle' means *the contextually determined bearer of 'Aristotle'*, I do not commit to the view that my utterance is true in worlds in which Aristotle isn't fond of dogs but in which

some other person named 'Aristotle' is fond of dogs. (Of course, name *types* are *not* rigid designators; they couldn't be, because they don't refer at all.)

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