

# Meaning, Truth and Entitlement

## Knowledge

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Let us turn to the problem of *a priori* knowledge, the truths of reason. I would like you to note that the strategy that Chisholm has been using up until now does not really develop in the case of the truths of reason. It ends up by being, in the first place, an attack on the linguistic theory of *a priori* knowledge and a defense of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. I want to discuss, in particular, his attack upon what he calls *linguisticism*.

According to Chisholm,

Versions of 'linguisticism' may be obtained merely by altering our exposition of psychologism. We may replace the references to ways in which people *think* by references to ways in which they *use language*, replace the references to what people *believe* by references to what they *write* or *say*, replace 'avoiding false belief' by 'avoiding absurdity,' and replace 'rules of thought' by 'rules of language.' The result could then be criticized substantially, *mutatis mutandis*, as before.

Some of the versions of linguisticism, however, are less straightforward. It is often said, for example, that the sentences formulating the truths of logic are 'true in virtue of the rules of language' and hence, that they are 'true in virtue of the way in which we use words.' What could this possibly mean?<sup>1</sup>

Many philosophers, myself included, have argued that truths of logic are a function of the way in which we use such words as 'all',

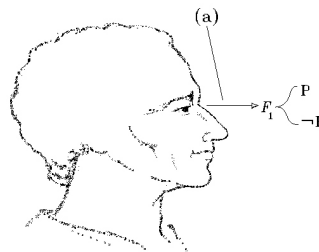


Figure 6.11 (a) direct apprehension, F1, the logical truth: the impossibility of both P and  $\sim$ P.

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<sup>1</sup> Chisholm, 82.

‘some’, ‘not’, and so on. What Chisholm wants to do is to say that this is not so, the truths of logic are objective in the sense of *absolutely objective*. In terms of a diagram, *figure 6.11*, where  $P$  is a truth of logic, and  $\neg P$  is its contradictory, we directly apprehend the fact,  $F_I$ , that they cannot both be true.  $F_I$  is absolutely objective in the sense in which the rationalist thinks of *a priori* truths as being absolutely objective: they are completely independent of language; they have nothing to do with language; they *exist*. We are not interested in the contrast between subjective and inter-subjective in that way which concerns meanings: Chisholm will not settle for an intersubjective domain of existence. He means that they are objective in the knock-down, drag-out sense in which the rationalist thinks of *a priori* truths as objective.

What I want to do, obviously, is defend a version of linguisticism. What we need to do, therefore, is to see how he attacks it. Consider his examples<sup>2</sup> of two English sentences, ‘being red excludes being blue’ and ‘being rational and animal includes being animal.’ We have run into those phrases before: ‘being red’ and ‘being blue’ are a different coining of the abstract singular terms ‘redness’ and ‘blueness’. Hence, *triangularity* is the same as *being triangular*. Chisholm, right from the beginning, is formulating his truths in terms of abstract singular terms. He agrees that the truth of the sentences, ‘being red excludes being blue’ and ‘being rational and animal includes being animal,’ in part, depends on the way in which we use words. He makes the obvious point that it is an historical accident that we use the word ‘blue’ to stand for a color, for we might have used the word ‘blue’ to stand for a shape or for an ethical characteristic. Chisholm goes on to remark,

If we used ‘being blue’ to refer to the property of being heavy, and not to being blue, then the first sentence (provided the other words in it had their present use) would be false instead of true. And if we used the word ‘and’ to express the relation of disjunction instead of conjunction, then the second sentence (again, provided that the other words in it had their present use) would also be false instead of true.<sup>3</sup>

I want you to underline the word ‘use’ there, you see, because that needs to be in there. What does he think is the use of the word ‘blue’?

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<sup>2</sup>. Chisholm, 82.

<sup>3</sup>. Chisholm, 82.

Naturally, Chisholm is thinking that the word ‘blue’ is being used as a label. In figure 6.12, we find an entity *blueness* or *being blue* and the use of the word ‘blue’ is simply to stand for, or be a label of, this attribute. It appears that he thinks of *use* not, as we did, in terms of the way in which the word functions in the language system; he identifies the use of the word as a *label* for an abstract entity. Therefore, when he says that we could have used the word other than we did, he means that we could have used it as a label for something else. In our sense of the word ‘use’, when we think of the way in which the word ‘blue’ functions in the language (and we think of every word having a distinctive function in our sense of the word ‘use’), it is also true that we could have given some other word *that* function. We could have given some other word that function just as in chess we could have used pieces of different shapes or different sizes than we now do to play a certain role in the game of chess. But you see, ‘use’ for Chisholm does not mean functioning along with other words in a linguistic activity; rather, it is a matter of using a word as a label.

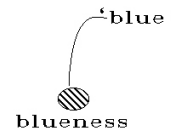


Figure 6.12

The key issue involves the notion of use and the notion of the use being made the supposed relation of standing-for: a relation of standing-for between a label and an abstract entity. He brings this out very clearly, I think, in relation to another example, one that deals with basic logical truths such as, *if p and q, then p*. One view is that the words ‘if’, ‘and’, and ‘then’ have a certain use which could have been performed by other words but, in point of fact, are performed by words having that particular sound and that particular shape. The defenders of linguisticism would say that sentences of this kind are logically true, are *a priori* true, if you will, by virtue of the function of the logical words in them and the function of those words in that kind of pattern. Here by ‘use’, we would mean *function*. It would be how these words ‘if...then’, ‘and’, and ‘not’ all function here in the game, the language game, as Wittgenstein called it, of argument and reasoning. What does Chisholm mean by ‘use’ when he is speaking of ‘if...then’ as standing for implication? According to *figure 6.13*, there is an entity called *implication*. Sim-

ilarly, the use of ‘and’ is to stand for *conjunction*. Again, *use* is boiled down to this relation of standing-for.

A contrary position would be that the use of these logical words is different from every other functioning in a novel kind of way in the language game of reason. Chisholm’s two examples are both built on the idea that the basic use that words have is to label. Now what we did is to turn it on its head and to say that the basic use that the word has is the way in which it functions in relation to other words in connection with perception and with the contexts in which the word is used. In addition, the idea that words stand for, for example, that the word ‘and’ stands for conjunction, is really a way of summing up the function in a way we could follow up; but there is no such thing, really, as a relation of *standing-for* or a relation of, as he puts it here, *referring*. Therefore, his use of the word ‘use’ is crucial to the argument.

A second point emerges here: we have to distinguish between two levels of statements. Consider, for example,  $p$  ( $p \& p$ ). This is a general truth. Chisholm says, roughly, that whatever you put in for  $p$ , you can say not both  $p$  and  $not-p$ . If you put ‘it is raining’ for  $p$ , then you would have ‘not both it is raining and it is not raining’ which is a first-level statement because it does not mention sentences. It is about the world. We have to watch very carefully here. I want to emphasize, then, that this is a first-level statement. Another example is ‘everything is either red or not red’. Notice that it uses the word ‘red’ and not ‘redness’. In this case we have a general truth which uses the word ‘red’ and not the abstract singular term ‘being red’.

There is, however, a second level on which we could say ‘every proposition is either true or false’ where ‘proposition’ now, again, refers to something that has the form of, for example, *that it is raining*.<sup>4</sup> Here we make a *second-level* statement which involves a proposition’s (e.g., *that it is raining*) being true or false and which

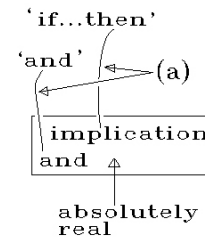


Figure 6.13 (a) The labeling between words and abstracts.

<sup>4</sup> The sentence entails *that it is raining* is either true or false.

involves, not ‘it is raining’, but ‘that it is raining’. It involves the *use* of an abstract singular term. We could say ‘redness or not redness is exemplified by everything’. This is a second-level truth. In other words, the *a priori* truths we have been discussing can be formulated either in a first-level or in a second-level way. I want you to notice that Chisholm always formulates his examples in a second-level way; and that comes out very clearly in the examples that we have discussed. These second-level formulations involve abstract terms and that is why he can so easily identify *use* here with labeling. When he talks about the use of a word, he really has in mind to take his examples from ‘blueness’. In the tradition, abstract terms are thought to be names. There is a weighty tradition behind it. So, as I indicated, the defender of the linguistic view concentrates on ‘blue’ and on ‘and’. Chisholm ultimately concentrates not on ‘and’, but on *conjunction*. Though he uses the word ‘and’ here, he could have said, for example, “the conjunction of being rational and animal implies being animal.” It remains to show you the importance of formulating the issue in terms of first-level statements, in terms of statements which do not involve abstract singular terms.

### **Truth and Meaning**

I have the overwhelming sense that we have opened a door and gone into a room but have just barely gotten in there. Fortunately, this is not an occasion in which we are supposed to solve all the problems that are related to the theory of knowledge; we are out to get ourselves familiar with the space of the theory of knowledge. That is what I am trying to do; there are many topics that I would like to say more about, but we do not have the space to deal with them. I will try to pick out things which I regard as central, given the framework that we have developed and the dialogue that we have engaged in.

I was pointing out that, at the back of Chisholm’s mind, is the idea that the fundamental use of words, the fundamental function of words, is to label, to stand for the sort of things that we have been calling “meanings”, or, also, the sorts of things we have been calling “intelligibles”, “believables”, “thinkables” and so on. And you recall, we gave an analysis according to which the function of words is to be so construed that the meaning of words consists of the complex ways in which they work together in what Wittgenstein

called *language games*: in other words, functions involved in cases in which we draw inferences, respond to objects with the correct language and so on.

We would expect, on the sort of view that you and I would want to defend, that crucial to the idea of what makes a sentence true is its correct functioning in a particular kind of context in which it is occurring. *Truth* is roughly a matter of *correct functioning*, and different sentences function differently although different kinds of sentences are interrelated. Thus, “all men are mortal” is interestingly related to “Socrates is mortal.” There are, as you have seen earlier, patterns, explored by logic, among different kinds of sentences, and therefore, from the point of view that I am defending here, inter-relationships among their functions.

In characterizing the linguistic view, Chisholm speaks of *us* and *our language*: ‘true solely in virtue of the rules of *our language*’, or ‘true solely in virtue of the way in which *we* use words.’ What I attempted to do earlier was to show that we can formulate rules which transcend the limitations of one particular language whereas he is focusing his attention here on the contrast between our language and the domain of entities called *being red*, *being blue*, *conjunction*, *disjunction*, *implication* and so on. And he is thinking of those as absolutely objective in a good old classical Platonic manner. He then takes words, as I said, like ‘blue,’ ‘and,’ and so on as labeling these items. He claims that if we understand the phrase ‘solely in virtue of’ in a natural way, then the linguistic view is obviously false.<sup>5</sup>

What is his reasoning? It, he says,

...would be to say that the only conditions that need to obtain for the sentence to be true is that we use words in certain ways...But let us consider what must obtain if the English sentence “being red excludes being blue” is to be true. One such condition is indicated by the following sentence which we may call “T”:

The English sentence “Being red excludes being blue” is true if, and only if, being red excludes being blue.<sup>6</sup>

Now he tells us that clearly the first part of T involves something linguistic and that the final part is a necessary condition for the truth of the English sentence mentioned in the first part. However, he tells us that this final sentence refers to properties. It is certainly

<sup>5</sup>. Chisholm, 83.

<sup>6</sup>. Chisholm, 83.

true that the English sentence ‘being red excludes being blue’ is true if and only if being red excludes being blue. And ‘being red’ is an expression for a property. Chisholm thinks of it as labeling an entity. In *figure 6.14*, (a) is an entity, the property being red, and Chisholm thinks of the English phrase ‘being red’ as labeling this entity, being red.

What I want to suggest, of course, is that *being red excludes being blue* is really not about the non-linguistic; it is really an *interlinguistic* sentence about language. In other words, it says roughly:

one can correctly infer a this is not blue  
from a this is red

Here we encounter what we talked about under the heading of classifications. In other words, a statement to the effect that being red excludes being blue does not talk about a special relationship in reality, a relation of exclusion, between an entity called being red and an entity called being blue. It is a way which we<sup>7</sup> have in English, parallel to other languages, of telling ourselves, without explicitly referring to language, that certain kinds of linguistic moves are correct. One can correctly infer a this is not blue from this is red in any language. Or, in terms of what it is not correct to assert jointly,

one cannot correctly assert both this is red and it is blue .

I suggest that the talk about a property excluding a property is a way of talking about what we can correctly do in the way of combining sentences. It tells us that one cannot correctly combine a this is red and a it is blue . In contrast, Chisholm thinks of the phrase ‘being red’ as referring to something in the domain which we were talking about in great detail when we were discussing rationalism.

The English sentence ‘being red excludes being blue’ is true indeed if and if only being red excludes being blue. But that does not really explain what ‘being red excludes being blue’ does. What kind of sentence is it? In effect, it is a rule which, among other things, tells us that (paraphrasing now) it is correct to say “if any-

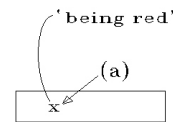


Figure 6.14 (a) The absolutely objective entity *being red*

<sup>7</sup> Leaving aside the whole apparatus of language and metalanguage and the whole notion of hierarchies in which we talk about rules of talking.

thing is red then it is not blue.” This is a rule which concerns any language which includes a word functioning as our word ‘red’ does and a word functioning as our word ‘blue’ does. [Sellars calls the class of these types of rules, “ought-to-dos”.] We can put it this way, one can correctly infer—and here I made it explicitly a matter of these functions which can be formed in different languages by different materials—a *this is not blue* from a *this is red*, one cannot correctly assert both a *this is red* and a *it is blue*. These are all correctnesses and incorrectnesses that are formulated by ‘being red excludes being blue.’

Now, let us take the more strictly logical example and see if we can get a better sense of what kind of mistake I think Chisholm is making. Notice that he formulates his logical example in terms of these very abstract words, for example, ‘being animal and rational includes being rational’. (Note that, in ‘being rational and animal’, the word ‘being’ is first because ‘being’ is operating over both: it is the property of being animal and rational. This is an abstract term formed from a conjunction.) Compare that with ‘if anything is rational and animal, then it is animal’. This is the level of language at which we are not talking about language but we are using language, you see. But we also find this curious level at which we are using these abstract expressions ‘being animal and rational’, ‘being animal’. What I want to suggest is that here again we have a rule; and it’s a rule which we can explain in terms of the way in which ‘and’ functions or an “andy” word in any language functions. Now what the sentences tells us is that certain statements are correct and also that it is correct to infer that something is animal if it is rational and animal. It tells us that it is correct to infer an *it is animal* from an *this is rational and animal*. (I’ll assume again that we have a specific example here to illustrate it). This statement is at a higher level and formulates a rule which is, however, not about English only. Chisholm relied a great deal on that point. It is indeed true that this statement is not concerned only with English. That is a key thing about properties, relations and the like. They are not tied to any one language. But according to the argument that I offered, that is not because they are not about language but because they are not specifically about our language. As I put it, they are not non-linguistic; they are just not parochial. They are about any language in which certain functions are performed and which, roughly, contains

words which function as words do function in our language. If you look at his example, your first temptation is to say, "Well, of course, this is not about language; it's certainly not about English." Chisholm agrees it's not about English but he thinks from that he can conclude that it is not about language. I am arguing that it is a way of talking about predicates and connectives.

Let me give another example. Suppose we deal with the problem of what accounts for logical truths, of what explains why certain sentences are true: for example, Tom is tall or Tom is not tall. The linguistic philosopher wants to say what explains the truth of that is the logical form that it has, a matter of the words 'or' and 'not' occurring as they do. Its form is really  $p$  or  $not-p$ . It would be the general form which is the presentable. The linguistic philosopher wants to say that what explains the truth of this is the way in which 'or' and 'not' function in the logical structure of the language. What Chisholm does is to consider the English sentence, 'Tom is tall' (He uses the more general kind of example, roughly, for every  $P$ ,  $P$  or  $not-P$ . But let us take this particular example because the same point can be made). The English sentence 'Tom is tall or Tom is not tall' is true if and only if Tom is tall or Tom is not tall. Indeed, this is true. And, as a matter of fact, we can say that the English sentence 'Tom is tall or Tom is not tall' stands for the proposition that Tom is tall or Tom is not tall.

That proposition is true if and only if Tom is tall or Tom is not tall. According to our analysis, to say that the English sentence 'Tom is tall or Tom is not tall' stands for the proposition that Tom is tall or Tom is not tall is to classify it. It is to say that it is a sentence which is doing the kind of job that is done in any language by an expression consisting of an expression which does the job that 'Tom' does, and the predicate which does the kind of job that 'tall' does, built into a larger sentence by means of an expression which does the work that 'or' does and so on. The *stands for* is, as we said, a matter of giving a classification. In this case, the function is a very complex one involving the functions of constituent expressions.

But now the crucial thing is: what is the force of 'the proposition is true if and only if Tom is tall or Tom is not tall'. What does Chisholm tell us? For this purpose, we can look again at the English sentence: 'Tom is tall or Tom is not tall' is true if, and only if, Tom is tall or Tom is not tall. He tells us that the right-hand side does not

refer to language. Therefore, he says what makes this side true is a non-linguistic matter. And therefore, what makes ‘Tom is tall or Tom is not tall’ true is not a matter of language. Now the sad thing here is that ‘if and only if’ has nothing to do with explanation. In other words, that Tom is tall or Tom is not tall does not explain the truth of this. All it does it to put down a straightforward truth-condition.

The explanation of the truth is still a matter of how the logical words function. Let me illustrate:

$2+2=4$  if and only if  $3+3=6$ .

Here this whole thing is true, but you do not explain why  $2+2=4$  by pointing out that  $3+3=6$ . Hence, that ‘if and only if’ merely means that they are true together, and, as a matter of fact, you can demonstrate that they are both true. When we correctly say that English sentence ‘Tom is tall or Tom is not tall’ is true if and only if Tom is tall or Tom is not tall, we must not suppose that we are giving an explanation. All that we are making is a perfectly correct claim that the left-hand side here is true if and only if the right-hand side is true. If the one were false, then the other would be false. The fact that the right-hand side of such a biconditional does not refer to language does not mean that the explanation of the truth of a sentence does not refer to language. This is a very basic mistake. Chisholm wants to say, “Aha! the English sentence ‘Tom is tall or Tom is not tall’ is true if and only if Tom is tall or Tom is not tall. Since the right-hand side of the biconditional does not refer to language, what makes the original sentence true cannot be a matter of language”—that simply is a non-sequitur. It can still be a matter of how the word ‘or’ functions and how the word ‘not’ functions when you put them in the context of the same basic sentence involving ‘Tom’ and ‘tall’.

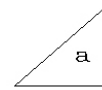


Figure 6.15

There is another example that serves to follow the point through. Suppose that a certain object *a*, in *figure 6.15*, is triangular. Take, for instance,

‘This (i.e., *a*) is triangular’ is true if and only if *a* is triangular.

Perfectly true, but again ‘if and only if’ *is not explanatory*: it is not an explanatory expression. ‘If and only if’ merely means that what is in the left side is true only if what is in the right side is true. If *a*’s being triangular does not explain why this is true, what does explain why this is true? Because, given the diagram, it is correct for me to use the word ‘this’ in connection with that object, and it is also correct to respond to that kind of object with the word ‘triangular’ as opposed to ‘circular’, or ‘square’. Thus, the explanation of the truth of ‘this is triangular’ can, indeed, refer to what is correct in the way of linguistic usage. You see, obviously Chisholm would say, “Well, ‘this is triangular’ is true if and only if *a* is triangular. And ‘*a* is triangular’ does not refer to language; therefore, that which explains why this is true cannot be a matter of language, can’t be a matter of correctnesses, or incorrectnesses referring to language.” That is a non-sequitur. That ‘this is triangular’ is true if and only if *a* is triangular is non-controversial, about as non-controversial as you can get. What it is giving us is not an explanation. The explanation appeals to such things as that it is correct to speak of this sort of thing in English by the word ‘triangular’, in French by another word, and it is correct to use the word ‘this’ when you are looking at something and are in an expressing-your-perception frame of mind.

Actually, then, there is a basic flaw running throughout his whole account: namely, that he is assuming that these simple truth-condition sentences are explanatory sentences. Thus the argument is what occurs on the right-hand side of the ‘if and only if’ does not refer to language, and therefore you cannot explain why something is true with reference to correct use of language. However, Chisholm’s conclusion follows if ‘if and only if’ means *is explained by* but it does not mean that; therefore, as I said, the argument is based on a mistake. It is a very plausible argument and many people are taken in by it. But philosophical mistakes linger on because of their plausibility. If it were not plausible, it would have been scotched a long time ago.

As we see, what explains the truth of sentences is a matter of correctnesses and incorrectnesses with respect to language. Some of these correctnesses and incorrectnesses are purely inter-linguistic; they involve how it is correct to put sentences together. The purely logical examples are straightforward cases of that. They

concern what we call “consistency”: when you are putting sentences together in the right way, when they should not be asserted in one breath (for example “Tom is tall and Tom is not tall”). However, some correctnesses are correctnesses which concern how we respond to the world. If I respond to a green book by saying “this is a red book,” given the way in which we, in point of fact, use those sounds, that would be an incorrect response. Therefore, some correctnesses and incorrectnesses concerning language also involve non-linguistic items.

In this we have to be careful, as I emphasized, about levels. There is the object language level, and then there would be higher levels, levels where you talk about what is incompatible with what. But, once one gets down to the nitty gritty and looks at the object language truths, then he finds Chisholm’s fundamental mistake, blurred by the mixture of moving from one level to another.

## Thoughts

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I want to finish with the theme of verbal behaviorism because this is where we can really put forth the alternative to the Cartesian strategy. At the end of the earlier discussion of verbal behaviorism, I pointed out that people can learn to respond correctly to their own propensities. Children can be brought, as I put it, to respond correctly to their propensities to hit out, as in the case of anger. They can learn to say “I am angry.” I want to emphasize some of the very important points that arise in this account.

Consider *figure 6.16* in which we find an angry person. Here is,  $P_1$ , the propensity to strike out—roughly, anger. It is epitomized by the propensity to damage somebody; when you are angry at somebody you have a propensity to injure, damage, hurt them, in some way or other, either very politely, or in a straightforward small-child kind of way. We will take anger to be the propensity. Suppose that the person has been trained.<sup>8</sup> This

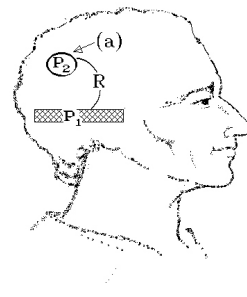


Figure 6.16 (a) The propensity to say 'I am angry'. R, the response tie. P1, the propensity to strike out (anger).

<sup>8</sup>.

does not mean that the child is apprehending or being aware of the propensity to hit out (that is the way the Cartesian would construe what we are saying here). It means merely that he has the propensity,  $P_2$ , to respond to the propensity  $P_1$  either by saying “I am angry” or by simply having the propensity to say it and suppressing it because he has been brought up so that he does not babble his thoughts.

The propensity,  $P_2$ , is a matter of a response tie,  $R$ , which is a result of parental training which involves, first of all, teaching the child, Jones, how to say that he is angry. When he gets into the logical space of anger, he does not even need to know that he is angry; the parent can so bring it about that he says, “I am angry.” [The parents follow the type of rule that Sellars characterizes as an “ought-to-be”, or a rule concerning entitlement.] His parents might say, “You are angry.” “I am angry?” he replies; “Yes, you are angry.” In this way, there can be a connection made between the anger and the saying of “I am angry” which does not involve anything that can be called a noticing of anger. I want to argue that noticing is something that *presupposes* these kinds of connections rather than being something which is *antecedent* to them. This will come out more clearly when I go on to make the next point: namely that there are two kinds of generalizations we can make about objects.

One kind of generalization concerns what we can establish by observation. You might say, “Well, we can establish by ordinary familiar induction (the kind that Russell talks about) that all situations of one kind are accompanied by a situation of another kind. Roughly, all A situations are B situations, where A and B are both observables.” But then, you will recall, in discussing the concept of sensation, I pointed out that in addition to kinds of generalizations we can make at the level of induction, there are theoretical explanations where we appeal to states of affairs that are not observed. There can be two kinds of explanation of why the balloon expands. One is simply in terms of the fact that it is a general truth that when heated, gas tends to expand. The other explanation involved an appeal to a physical theory which postulates the existence of micro-particles which move faster and faster when a source of heat is applied and therefore, in the case of the balloon, hit more and more

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The word ‘training’ is a dangerous word here because it makes it sound so much like wiring up a computer which has been trained to respond to this with the propensity,  $P_2$ , to say ‘I am angry’.

frequently against sides of the balloon and push the sides of the balloon away, making it expand. As I indicated, the kind of account that we get when thinking in terms of verbal behaviorism is a very crude theory; it is a theory which basically appeals to the sorts of things that we can observe, or to what we can infer from what we observe simply by going from actuality to propensity—as the Scholastics put it, from what actually happens to what was possible.

Actually, we have a much better account of human behavior than you can formulate in terms of the apparatus of verbal behaviorism. In the first place, as I said, verbal behaviorism cannot get off the ground unless you go from what people actually say out loud to their propensities. But then since people act reasonably much more quickly than they can talk, we must suppose that these propensities change and shift very, very quickly. Thus, already at the level of verbal behaviorism, these propensities get characteristics which do not, in any direct way, mirror the clumsiness of sheer verbal expression. It has always traditionally been said that thought moves very quickly; we speak of moving with the speed of thought and so on. Therefore, already at the commonsense level, I think people begin to sketch a richer theory according to which there are episodes that occur in persons which can occur very quickly. The idea is that there are episodes which are not propensities to say things, but are part of a framework for explaining why these propensities occur as they do, how they are related to one another, and why they change with the speed with which they can change. I want you to think of these episodes in this explanatory framework as *in a certain way* analogous to the microphysical particles which come in to the explanations of the gross observable behavior of things. Microphysical particles behave in very subtle and complicated ways and have a much richer kind of system of relationships to each other than anything at the level of observation that we can detect. And, similarly, I want you to think, then, of commonsense as starting out with the idea of people having propensities and shifting propensities to speak candidly. Then think of commonsense as gradually evolving a theory which is richer and which, roughly, is a framework that stands to these propensities to think out loud candidly as a sophisticated theory in physics stands to the observable phenomena that the theory tries to explain. Of course, you can

guess what I will call those episodes; I will call them “thoughts.” I suggest that instead of thoughts being, so to speak, the most obvious things that there are in the world, as they are to Chisholm, the very notion of thoughts is a constructive creation (as a theory is a constructive creation) in a theory of persons and rational behavior.

It is a good theory; it works. The theory is modeled on speech. Whenever people talk about thoughts, you will find them referring to them as though they were little speeches going on inside people. Why is that? Why, in the novels, do you find quoting used when you are referring to a person’s thoughts? It is because our fundamental model for a thought is a piece of candid speech. The notion of a model here is very important. Consider, for example, this theory in terms of which we explain why balloons expand when heated.<sup>9</sup> Consider the notion of a molecule (the word comes from Latin and in Latin means a little particle, a little body). We start out a theory usually by constructing a model in terms of things that behave roughly and clumsily like the things that we want to postulate in our theory. What we can say is that little particles bumping against each other are the kind of model for the objects which we introduce in our theory. What I want to suggest, then, is that candid overt speech, spontaneous overt speech is the model for thought. Remember Jones with something on the tip of his tongue: “Why it didn’t stop?” When you think of a person’s thinking *it did not stop*, your model for that thought is a candid speech event, viz., the saying “It didn’t stop.” But then, of course, every model will carry with it into the theory a commentary explaining how unlike the items you are postulating in your theory are from the items that you take as your model.

After all, molecules are not exactly like little tiny bodies because they behave in very funny ways. By the time you get down to atoms and pi-mesons, they are behaving in very funny ways indeed. We still start out, as it were, by trying to picture in terms of observable things and then, of course, the items turn out to behave in wondrous ways. In certain respects, they are like observable things but, in others, they behave in very odd ways. There is a commentary in the model. The same thing is true in the case of thought. As I said, our basic model for thought is candid sayings. But then, we have a

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<sup>9</sup> Editor’s note: see *SPR*, 117, ‘The Language of Theories’, for a related discussion of the manner in which a theory mediates between world-word connections.

little commentary, “You mean there is an inner tongue which is wagging somewhere in the back here?” “No, I don’t mean that.” “Therefore, it is not really like speech.” “Well, it’s like speech and it’s not really like speech, you see. Something goes on here very much like what goes on when you explain to someone what an electron is or what a molecule is.” I want you, then, as an alternative to Chisholm’s approach, to think of thought episodes as

elements in a theoretical framework designed to explain how people come to have propensities to use language in the way in which they do. And I hope that it would be understood that as a person can be trained to respond to propensities, so almost by the same token, he can be trained to respond to more subtle items.

Consider *figure 6.17*. Here is the propensity, (a), and the episode, (b), which is part of the framework explaining why (a) is there. The important thing is the ability to respond to this episode with, for example, *the thought occurred to me that  $2+2=4$* . Suppose that I say candidly, “the thought occurred to me that  $2+2=4$ .” Chisholm, as we see in *figure 6.18*, wants to say, “Well, there is a special activity of apprehending; you apprehend this thought that  $2+2=4$ , this episode of thinking that  $2+2=4$ .” Then

you, as it were, casually or without any reflection, set about expressing it. It is as though language comes in as something that was chosen; you chose to express it. There is such a thing as choosing language but I warned about taking that as the fundamental model. For Chisholm, you see, it is a model of there being an activity of ap-

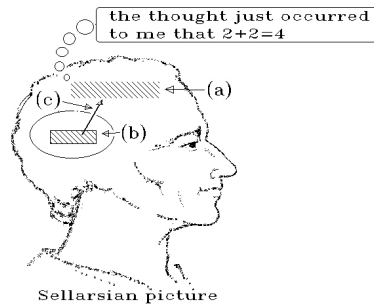


Figure 6.17 (a) The propensity: the thought just occurred to me that  $2+2=4$ . (b) An episodic thought. (c) The arrow indicates the response.

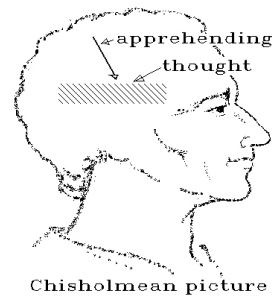


Figure 6.18.

prehending the thinking. We have the thought, and then there is a willing, a deciding, a choosing, a setting oneself to express it by using the piece of language: “the thought occurred to me that  $2+2=4$ .” I want to suggest that, on the contrary, the propensity to say is a response to this thought. It is self-knowledge. We are responding to our thoughts in a reliable way.

Why are we responding in a *reliable* way? Because, that is the way we have been brought up. We have been brought up to use language correctly. Let me illustrate this point in terms of a very simple perceptual example which will involve a direct confrontation with Chisholm’s account of his principles. Let us consider a case which you will find spelled out in the second of the three papers on the *Structure of Knowledge*.<sup>10</sup> Consider the case where Jones sees there to be a red apple in front of him. Now, let us go back to the verbal behaviorist approach which we made more subtle by this introduction of a theoretical element in addition to talking simply in terms of propensities to speak out loud candidly. Suppose, for example, there is a table here with a red apple on it. Jones is in a sort of hungry frame of mind, you might say. His apple-noticing threshold has been lowered somewhat by this deprivation. He looks around: “Lo, a red apple! A red apple is here!” He’s making some kind of statement like this and he does it candidly. How can we tell that he is doing it candidly? Well, he is caught by surprise. There is nothing in the context that would lead us to suppose that he is acting out a play, trying to kid us or anything. First of all, we know that he’s been *appletized*; he turns around and says, “Lo, a red apple!” Surely, this is a candid response. Now why is it likely to be true? Why is this statement likely to be true? Because he has been brought up in the context of apples and has been in contexts where he and others respond to objects like that with the word ‘apple,’ and objects with the color like that with the word ‘red,’ and with the phrase ‘red apple.’ He has learned how to use demonstratives. Thus, putting all of these abilities together, all of these propensities lurking in him, he says, “Lo, a red apple! This is a red apple.” How does the truth business come in? Obviously he is responding correctly.

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<sup>10</sup>*Action, Knowledge and Reality: Studies in Honor of Wilfrid Sellars*, Castañeda, Hector-Neri (ed.), (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975).

Let us put a screen around the apple. Now we know what these apples are like. We know that he is a good guy; he is not putting us on. We know that he has been looking around, looking for bread crumbs, anything. So he goes behind the screen, and we hear him suddenly burst out, “Lo, a red apple!” We do not see the apple. Do we have any reason to believe that there is an apple there? Of course we do. Jones has candidly said (or thought out loud), “Lo, a red apple!” Given the ‘Lo, a red apple’ and that there is nothing which leads us to suppose that he is play acting, putting us on, or so on, we conclude that it is probable, that there is good reason to believe that there is a red apple there. Now we are inferring:

Jones candidly said, “Lo, a red apple”

and in the absence of countervailing, discrediting circumstances,

So it is reasonable for us to believe that there is a red apple in front of Jones.

And this is a typical example. [The “ought to be”s involved here constitute Sellars’ “translevel inference rules.” This rules makes up part of the fabric of entitlements and involves two rules of criticism, and a rule of action as indicated in the paper “Trans-level Entitlements” on the website, p. 36.] Why is it reasonable for us? Can we explain why it is reasonable? Yes, because we would explain the reasonableness in terms of the fact that Jones has gone through the normal procedure of learning to use the word ‘apple’ and how to use the word ‘lo’ and so on. And so, it is explained in terms of Jones’ *language acquisition*. All right, we notice our inference, and we have a theory which justifies our inferring. The theory concerns language acquisition, and the premise is that Jones candidly uttered “Lo, a red apple!” My conclusion, in terms of the theory, is that it is reasonable for us to believe that there is a red apple in front of him.

Notice that we cannot only do this with respect to Jones, but we can do it with respect to ourselves as language users. For example, we often find ourselves candidly thinking out loud, making candid statements. And we can go through the same pattern here. Suppose, for example, I go behind the curtain and I am in the same situation that Jones was in and I say, “Lo, a red apple!” Then I turn away to talk to you. Then I begin to wonder and I say, “I just candidly said,

‘lo, a red apple; there is a red apple.’” I’m not kidding anybody, not even myself; I’m not putting on an act. Hence, in all probability there is an apple there. We can make the same kind of inference from the fact that we candidly said something to something’s being so, or to it’s being likely that something is so. Just as we could with respect to Jones, we can make a first person use of this fact: I just candidly said, ‘lo, a red apple!’; so it is reasonable for me to believe that there was a red apple in front of me. Why is it reasonable? For the same reason. I know not only how Jones learned language, I know how I learned the language.

What I want to suggest is that the justification for Chisholm’s epistemic principles is to be found in terms of theories of how we learn a language and the characteristics of the language that we learn to use. Jones can reason also: I just thought out loud, “Lo, apple!” So there is a good reason to believe that there is a red apple in front of me. Naturally, this reasoning is not the reasoning that he originally went through because he did not go through any. He said, “Lo, a red apple”—no reasoning whatever. But, you can now reason about the reasonableness of the believing that there is a red apple there on the basis of the sheer fact that you have a spontaneous tendency to say that a red apple is there. When I was here and said, “Lo, a red apple,” I am not inferring. But, you see, the belief that there is a red apple there is now a reasonable one for me because, given the way that I learned language, if I candidly say that there is a red apple there, in all likelihood, there is one there.

This can be extended to the domain of thoughts. If one spontaneously thinks, “Aha! there is a red apple there,” then that thought is likely to be true. Chisholm would say that if we think we perceive a red apple, then the proposition that there is a red apple there is reasonable with respect to me. But he says that is an example of a principle of evidence that you cannot establish and that you must accept under the penalty that if you don’t accept that kind of principle, there is no knowledge. I want to say that once we understand how language is learned, these principles fall out naturally. They fall out naturally, naturalistically, so to speak, and non-Cartesianly from a theory of persons as language users and, therefore, as thinkers. Well, as I said, this is what you find in the *Structure of Knowledge* (second essay and, developed further, in the third essay called

*Epistemic Principles*) where I take direct issue with Chisholm and defend this kind of strategy.

As I said, I have a large number of topics that I wanted to discuss but have no time to. Let me say a bit more about truth. Chisholm does have something to say about truth and it is important to examine it with some care to see how illuminating it is. According to Chisholm, we need the notion of a state of affairs. The basic idea he has about truth is that states of affairs can either obtain or not obtain, exist or do not exist.<sup>11</sup> Thus, consider the state of affairs referred to by this expression ‘Socrates *being* wise’, or ‘that Socrates is wise’. There are a number of ways in which you can refer to a state of affairs according to Chisholm, but you will notice that they all involve an abstraction operator: Socrates *being* wise or *that* Socrates is wise. These states of affairs can either obtain or not obtain. We abstract from the distinction of the past, present and future so that a state of affairs is expressed by the sort of thing we have been calling abstract singular terms.

We can say of a state of affairs, for example, *Tom’s being tall*, that it exists, that it obtains. And therefore, what Chisholm does is to define the truth of beliefs, or of believings, in terms of the existing of states of affairs. Suppose that Jones believes that Tom is tall. In other words, as Chisholm puts it (making it still more abstract), *Jones believes that Tom’s being tall exists (or obtains). He just believes that Tom is tall. According to Chisholm, his belief that Tom is tall is true just in case the state of affairs Tom is tall exists (obtains).* What I want you to notice is there is something funny about this. *Tom’s being tall*, the state of affairs, and *that Tom is tall*, which we can suppose to be the belief, have the same structure. First we have *that Tom is tall* and we say of it that it is true. And second, we have *Tom’s being tall* and we say of it that it exists. We could have said, “*that Tom is tall* exists.” Now I suggest that what we have here is like:

we’re here because we’re here because we’re here because  
we’re here,

in the sense that the left-hand side says exactly what the right hand-side says. We do not really get a theory of truth. All we do is to

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<sup>11</sup>Chisholm, 102.

point out that the concept of truth in the context of beliefs is the same as the concept of a state of affairs existing.

On the analysis that we offered, the belief that Tom is tall is simply a belief of the *Tom is tall* kind. Or, it can be a statement of the “Tom is tall” kind because we want to revise, as I emphasized, the relationship Chisholm thinks of as existing between believing and saying. To say the belief is true is to say, really, that it is a correct belief, a belief that one is entitled to have. Entitled to have, not because you have stolen it, so to speak; but just that in accordance with the correctnesses and incorrectnesses of thought and language, in the circumstances, that is the right belief to have (as opposed to a “Tom is short” belief). I suggest that *that Tom is tall* exists tells us simply that Tom is tall s are correct. This tells us that *that Tom is tall* beliefs are correct if, and only if, Tom is tall s, in general, are correct, where you are not limiting yourself to beliefs but to candid overt speech or to thoughts *in foro interno*.

Consequently, I think that if one examines Chisholm’s theory of truth, what we really get is

\_\_\_\_\_ is true if and only if \_\_\_\_\_ is true

which is true, but uninformative for much the same reason that I was developing earlier. Well now, I do not think there is time to embark on any other topic. I think you would have philosophical indigestion if we tried to.