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Roderick Chisholm (1916–1999)

Part I: Epistemology

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Part II: Metaphysics

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Roderick Chisholm's work spans six decades and an impressive range of subjects. His books and articles on Brentano and Meinong, together with his work as a translator and editor, and as director of the Brentano Foundation, brought Anglo-American analytic philosophy back into contact with the riches of the Austrian philosophical tradition. He wrote several important papers on the foundations of ethics and axiology (e.g. Chisholm 1963, 1974). But Chisholm is best known for his many contributions to epistemology and metaphysics.

Part I: Epistemology

The most important of Roderick Chisholm's writings on epistemology are *Perceiving*, *The Foundations of Knowing*, and the three editions of *Theory of Knowledge*. In these and in his other works, Chisholm addressed virtually every major problem in epistemology. At the heart of his epistemological system is a set of epistemic principles that are intended to generate intuitively plausible results about the degree to which various propositions are justified for an individual. The key to Chisholm's epistemology is understanding how these principles fit together and also understanding both their epistemological status (how is it that we can come to know them?) and their metaphysical status (are they necessary or contingent, and what is it that makes them true?).

Terms of epistemic appraisal

In formulating his epistemological principles, Chisholm presents a set of terms of epistemic appraisal, which he defines using a basic, prephilosophical notion of justification. The following are simplified versions of the definitions that appear in the third edition of *Theory of Knowledge* (1989a).

Certain: A proposition p is certain for an individual S if and only if no other proposition is more justified for S to believe.

Evident: A proposition p is evident for S if and only if S is at least as justified in believing p as withholding judgment on that which is counterbalanced.

Beyond reasonable doubt: A proposition p is beyond reasonable doubt for S if and only if S is more justified in believing p than withholding judgment on p .

Epistemically in the clear: A proposition p is epistemically in the clear for S if and only if S is at least as justified in believing p as withholding judgment on p .

Probable: A proposition p is probable for S if and only if S is more justified in believing p than disbelieving p .

Counterbalanced: A proposition p is counterbalanced for S if and only if S is as justified in believing p as believing not- p , and vice-versa.

Chisholm intends the first five of these terms to be such that the higher ones imply the lower ones, and he introduces axioms to ensure this (1989a: 12, 13, 17). So, if a proposition is certain for someone, it is also evident for that person, and if it is evident for the person, it is also beyond reasonable doubt, and so on down the list.

Epistemic principles

Making use of the above terms of epistemic appraisal, Chisholm proposes a set of epistemic principles. The principles are expressed as conditionals, whose antecedents describe sufficient logical conditions for the application of these terms of epistemic appraisal. In the most straightforward case, a principle will assert that if certain non-epistemic conditions are satisfied (e.g. conditions about what someone is experiencing, believing, etc.), then a proposition p has a certain epistemic status for the person (e.g. it is evident or beyond reasonable doubt).

Chisholm's project in formulating these principles can be compared to a traditional project in ethics. A central aim of theoretical ethics is that of describing a set of non-moral conditions that is sufficient to make an action morally right. According to utilitarians, the non-moral conditions are ones having to do with the production of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. If of all the alternatives available to me, alternative X will produce the greatest balance of pleasures over pains, then I am required to do X . Utilitarians claim that this is *the* fundamental principle of morality. For them, there is but one source of moral obligation. Others disagree, insisting that there are other sources as well, ones that are not directly concerned with the maximization of happiness. Equality and fairness are among the usual candidates. If doing X would produce a fair result, then, according to this view, I have a prima-facie obligation to do X even if doing so would not maximize happiness. There may be other sources as well, and corresponding to each of these sources will be an ethical principle, asserting that the source in question produces a prima-facie moral obligation.

This latter view is the counterpart of Chisholm's view in epistemology. He thinks that there is more than one source of epistemic justification, and corresponding to each of these sources is an epistemic principle describing the conditions under which the source produces justification. However, Chisholm believes that some of these sources produce justification only in conjunction with other sources. Thus, the epis-

temic principles corresponding to these sources must make reference to the workings of other principles. The result is a collection of principles that are interdependent in complex ways.

Below are some of the most important of the epistemic principles that Chisholm defends:

- 1 If F is a self-presenting property and if S has F and if S believes himself (herself) to have F , then it is certain for S that he (she) has F .
- 2 If it is evident to S that he (she) is appeared to ϕ -ly and it is epistemically in the clear for S that something is appearing to him (her) in this way, then it is evident for S that something is appearing ϕ to him (her).
- 3 If it is evident to S that S is appeared to ϕ -ly and if S believes that it is a G that is appearing to him (her) in this way and if this proposition is epistemically in the clear for S , then it is beyond reasonable doubt for S that he (she) perceives a G .
- 4 If S believes a proposition that is not disconfirmed by the set of propositions that are evident for S , then the proposition is probable for S . (According to Chisholm, p disconfirms q amounts to p tends to make not- q probable.)
- 5 If S believes a proposition that is not disconfirmed by that which is probable for S , then the proposition is epistemically in the clear for S .
- 6 If there are three or more concurrent propositions and if each of them is epistemically clear for S and if in addition one of them is beyond reasonable doubt for S , then they all are beyond reasonable doubt for S .
- 7 If there are three or more concurrent propositions and if each of them is beyond reasonable for doubt for S and if in addition one is evident for S , then they are all evident for S .

Principle (1) makes reference to “self-presenting properties,” which Chisholm takes to be purely psychological properties. These properties are non-relational, in the sense that from the fact that I have a property of this sort, nothing logically follows about how I am related to the non-psychological world. For example, from the fact that I have the property of thinking about sailing my boat, it does not follow that I am in fact sailing my boat. I does not even follow that I have a boat. Nor, says Chisholm, does anything else follow about the non-psychological world. On other hand, from the fact that I have the property of being stuck in a traffic jam and thinking about sailing my boat, something does follow about the non-psychological world. It follows that there are traffic jams, that I am in one, and so on. So, this property is not a self-presenting one.

Chisholm distinguishes two kinds of self-presenting properties: intentional properties (ways of thinking, hoping, fearing, wondering, wishing, desiring, intending, etc.) and sensible properties (ways of being appeared to by the various senses). Principle (1) says that if I have a self-presenting property and if I believe that I have it, then the proposition that I have the property is maximally justified for me. Nothing is more justified for me to believe.

The self-presenting provides a foundation on the basis of which other contingent propositions can come to have justification. Principle (2) describes one way of this happening. If it is evident to me that I am having a visual experience of the sort that is involved in seeing a cat and if in addition it is epistemically in the clear for me that something is appearing to me in this way, these two things combine to make it evident

for me that something is appearing to me in this way. It may not be evident to me whether it is a cat or a dog or a bush that is appearing to me, but it is evident for me that something is doing so. It is evident, in other words, that I am not hallucinating.

Chisholm also proposes principles of “perceptual taking.” For example, the above principle (3) implies that if it is evident to me that I am appeared to in a certain way and if I believe that it is a cat that is appearing to me in this way and if moreover this proposition is epistemically in the clear for me, then these three things combine to make it beyond reasonable doubt for me that I perceive a cat. There is also a principle analogous to (3) for memory, expressed in terms of what I seem to remember (1989a: 68).

The antecedents of principles (2) and (3) make reference both to propositions that are evident and propositions that are being epistemically in the clear. Principle (1) describes how propositions can become evident for me, but Chisholm believes that the set of propositions that are epistemically in the clear is much larger than the set of evident propositions. Thus, there must be some other source of epistemic justification for them. What is this other source?

Chisholm says that it is belief itself, that one way in which a proposition can obtain a degree of epistemic justification is by being believed. Principles (4) and (5) are meant to describe how. According to (4), if I believe a proposition that is not disconfirmed by the set of propositions that are evident for me, then the proposition is probable for me. A large number of propositions can become probable for me in this way. They will have this weakly favorable epistemic status even if there is no other positive source of justification for them – from self-presentation, perception, or memory, for example. Moreover, principle (5) allows these propositions to rise to an even higher epistemic status. According to (5), if I believe a proposition that is not disconfirmed by the set of other propositions that are probable for me, then this proposition is epistemically in the clear for me. What are these propositions that are at least probable for me? In large part, they are propositions that satisfy the antecedent of principle (4), namely, believed propositions that are not disconfirmed by that which is evident for me. So, (4), as it were, creates much of the material for (5) to do its work.

Principles (4) and (5) are principles of negative coherence. Together they imply that if a believed proposition is not incoherent with the set of other propositions that are probable for me (many of which get this status by the fact that I believe them and they are not disconfirmed by that which is evident for me), then it is acceptable for me to believe the proposition.

With these principles in hand, reconsider the question of how the propositions mentioned in the antecedent of these principles (2) and (3) get the status of being epistemically in the clear for me. Principles (4) and (5) provide an answer. They can get this status by being believed by me. If I believe a proposition of the sort mentioned in the antecedent of (2), say the proposition that something is appearing to me in a cat-like way, and if the propositions that are probable for me do not disconfirm this proposition, then the proposition is epistemically in the clear for me. And then, principle (2) says that this in conjunction with the fact that it is evident to me that I am appeared to in a cat-like way makes it evident that something is appearing in a cat-like way to me. It is evident that I am not hallucinating.

Similarly for propositions of the sort mentioned in the antecedent of (3): if I believe that it is a real cat appearing to me in a cat-like way and if this proposition is not dis-

confirmed by the set of other propositions that are probable for me, then the proposition is epistemically in the clear for me. And then, principle (3) says that this in conjunction with the fact that it is evident for me that I am appeared to in a cat-like way makes it beyond reasonable doubt that it is a cat – and not, say, a dog or a bush – that I am perceiving.

Chisholm also thinks that relations of positive coherence among a set of propositions, or what he calls “concurrency relations,” are an important source of justification. A set of propositions is concurrent just if the propositions are logically independent and mutually supportive, in the sense that each proposition in the set is such that the others tend to make it probable.

Chisholm defends two principles of concurrency. Principle (6) says that if there is a set of concurrent propositions each of which is epistemically in the clear for me and at least one of which is also beyond reasonable for doubt for me, then they all become beyond reasonable doubt for me. Principle (7) says something similar for concurrent propositions of the next highest epistemic status. According to (7), if there is a concurrent set of propositions each of which is beyond reasonable for doubt for me and at least one of which is evident for me, then they all become evident for me.

So, despite his reputation as the leading foundationalist, Chisholm is also a coherentist. But unlike a pure coherentist, he does not think that positive coherence relations are the only source of empirical justification.

Together, the above principles describe what Chisholm takes to be some of the principal sources of empirical justification: namely, self-presentation, perception, memory, belief coupled with a lack of negative coherence, and, finally, positive coherence among propositions with some antecedent positive epistemic status.

The epistemological and metaphysical status of the principles

According to Chisholm, we have at least a vague, prephilosophical idea of what it is for a belief to be justified (1989a: 5), an idea which guides us in identifying instances of beliefs that are justified. In turn, these intuitions about justified beliefs allow the epistemological project to get off the ground. Chisholm is a particularist when it comes to matters of epistemological method (1989a: 7). He begins by examining particular instances of beliefs that he takes to be justified, and he then tries to abstract out of these instances general conditions of justification, which he expresses in the form of epistemic principles.

Chisholm also presupposes that we can improve and correct our beliefs by reflection, eliminating those that are unjustified and adding others that are justified (1989a: 1, 5). This presupposition acts as a constraint when he tries to use particular instances of justified belief to formulate general conditions of justification. It forces him to look for conditions to which we have reflective access, since otherwise there would be no reason to think that we could eliminate unjustified beliefs and add justified ones simply by being reflective. This is one of the senses in which Chisholm is an internalist about justification, in an epistemic sense.

The prephilosophical notion of justification that allows epistemology to get off the ground is vague, like most ordinary notions, but it need not remain so. One of the beneficial by-products of formulating and refining epistemic principles is that the basic

notion becomes increasingly precise, so that eventually epistemologists are in a position to give a general characterization of it. According to Chisholm, the characterization is to be given in ethical terms. Epistemic justification is ultimately to be understood in terms of ethical requirements on our believings and withholdings. More specifically, to say that an individual *S* is more justified in believing *p* than withholding on *p* is to say that *S* is required to prefer the former over the latter (1989a: 59). Chisholm goes on to claim that requirements to prefer are best explicated in a negative way. The requirement to prefer believing *p* over withholding on *p* is a requirement not to choose between believing and withholding without choosing the former, and this, he points out, is a requirement that can be satisfied even if one does not have direct control over one's believings and withholdings.

In addition, Chisholm says that this requirement is one that supervenes on non-normative states, specifically, on conscious states (1989a: 60). As such, a proposition could not have an epistemic status different from the one it does have for an individual without that individual's psychological states being different. Thus Chisholm takes his epistemic principles to express necessary truths, and the truths that they express are ultimately ones about the relationship between an individual's conscious psychological states at a time and an ethical requirement on believings and withholdings.

This illustrates another sense in which Chisholm is an internalist about justification, a metaphysical sense. The conditions that make a proposition evident or beyond reasonable doubt or probable are internal conditions. They are current, psychological states, not non-psychological "external" states, and not past psychological states. Chisholm's epistemic internalism requires something in addition to this. It requires that we always have reflective access to these internal conditions.

The definition of knowledge

The epistemic principles and the terms of epistemic appraisal used to formulate the principles constitute the heart of Chisholm's epistemological system. They are the tools Chisholm uses to address the major questions of epistemology. Among these questions, none has preoccupied Chisholm more than the question, What is knowledge?

Over his career, he proposed various definitions of knowledge, most of them variants of the idea that knowledge is non-defectively evident true belief. Like many proposed definitions of knowledge, Chisholm's definition was aimed at coming to grips with a pair of examples presented by Edmund Gettier, which were designed to illustrate that knowledge cannot be adequately defined as justified true belief. The basic idea behind both counterexamples is that one could be justified in believing a falsehood *P*, from which one deduces a truth *Q*. In this case one has a justified true belief in *Q* but does not know *Q*. Gettier's examples inspired a host of similar counterexamples, and the search was on for a fourth condition of knowledge, one that could be added to belief, truth, and justification to produce an adequate analysis of knowledge.

The two most distinctive aspects of Chisholm's attempt to handle Gettier problems are, first, his insistence that a belief must be evident to count as knowledge, and second, his insistence that what makes the belief evident must be non-defective (Chisholm adds some further qualification; see 1989a: 98).

“Evident” is among the strongest of Chisholm’s terms of epistemic appraisal, ranking only below that which is certain. A proposition is certain for an individual *S* only if it is maximally justified; no other proposition is more justified for *S* to believe. Among the propositions that can be certain are simple necessary truths, for example, the elementary truths of arithmetic, as well as contingent propositions about self-presenting states. In defining knowledge in terms of the evident, Chisholm is rejecting the view that knowledge requires certainty. On the other hand, he is insisting that knowledge involves a very high degree of justification. For Chisholm, a paradigmatic requirement on believing is that of withholding judgment on that which is counterbalanced, for example, the proposition that the next toss of a fair coin will turn up heads. A proposition is evident for *S*, in turn, only if *S* is at least as justified in believing it as withholding judgment on that which is counterbalanced. For Chisholm, this represents a very high degree of justification.

Moreover, if *S* is to have knowledge of a proposition, not only does the proposition have to be evident for *S*, in addition that which provides this very high degree of justification must be non-defective, in the sense that it must not make any falsehood evident for *S*. To illustrate the intuitive force of this requirement, consider one of Gettier’s examples. Smith has very strong evidence for the proposition that Jones owns a Ford, since Smith is aware that Jones has always owned a car, that the car has always been a Ford, that Jones has just offered Smith a ride while driving a Ford, and so on. From this evidence and the proposition that Jones owns a Ford, Smith deduces the disjunctive proposition, either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona. He infers this proposition despite having no idea of where Brown is. However, it turns out that Jones does not in fact own a Ford (he has been driving someone else’s car) while, by chance, Brown is in Barcelona. So Smith has very strong justification for the proposition that either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona; he believes the proposition; and the proposition is true. But it seems as if Smith does not know the proposition. Why? Chisholm’s answer is that although the proposition may be both true and evident for Smith, the considerations which makes the proposition evident for him also makes evident a falsehood, namely, that Jones owns a Ford.

Part II: Metaphysics

Whereas Chisholm’s epistemological views constitute a unified whole that may be usefully and concisely summarized, the many metaphysical problems he addressed form a heterogeneous collection that does not submit readily to concise overview. Furthermore, his role in the rejuvenation of metaphysics during the second half of the twentieth century would not be conveyed by a summary of his approaches to particular problems. One must back up a bit to see why and where his influence was great.

Chisholm’s impact on contemporary metaphysics would be hard to overestimate. By the end of 1950s his contributions were already numerous. He mounted an influential defense of the meaningfulness of traditional metaphysical questions in the face of deflationary critiques from the “ordinary language” philosophers (1951, 1952, 1964). He helped bring down the curtain on phenomenalism (1948, 1957b: Appendix). He drew attention to Franz Brentano’s characterization of the psychological in terms of “intentional inexistence,” and attempted to rehabilitate it as a logico-linguistic criterion of

sentences reporting intentional mental states (1955–6). He defended the thesis that linguistic intentionality is to be explicated in terms of the intentionality of thought, and not the reverse (1955a, 1957a). And he helped focus debates about counterfactuals, dispositions, and laws of nature (1946, 1955b). This work was widely anthologized in subsequent decades.

But his most important contributions to metaphysics came somewhat later, as he began to construct complex, evolving, and interconnected theories of action, persistence through time, events and causation, reference and intentionality, and ontological categories.

A summary of the positions he defended on these topics would go some way toward explaining his importance as a metaphysician. In many areas, one still finds Chisholm's work cited as containing the paradigmatic formulation of an important position, or the original statement of a paradox that stands in need of resolution. In action theory, for instance, his defense of the incompatibility of freedom and determinism, and of agent causation, are as frequently discussed as ever. But a simple survey of Chisholm's views on particular metaphysical issues would miss the forest for the trees. A better picture of his place in twentieth-century metaphysics can be gained by considering the status of metaphysics at the time his career began, and by comparing Chisholm's methodology with that of another imposing figure from the same generation: W. V. Quine.

Metaphysics at mid-century

Most philosophical work that bears the (sometimes pejorative) label “metaphysics” is characterized by its attention to matters of ontology. A central part of the discipline has always been the construction of comprehensive ontological schemes, theories about the nature of and relations among the most abstract categories under which absolutely *everything* falls, together with the explicit use of these ontological distinctions in the formulation of solutions to philosophical problems. Indeed, one could argue that distinctively metaphysical problems always involve the very abstract categories appropriate to ontology; and that any philosophical problem becomes, at least in part, a metaphysical problem as soon as ontological distinctions become central to its statement and resolution.

By mid-century, metaphysics of this sort had fallen on hard times. The air had gone out of debates about the ontological status of universals and particulars, the distinction between essence and accident, and so on. Russell and Moore and, perhaps, the tractarian Wittgenstein had taken such questions pretty seriously (see MOORE, RUSSELL, and WITTGENSTEIN); but logical empiricism, Wittgensteinian “therapy,” and Austinian “ordinary language philosophy” had eclipsed the metaphysical preoccupations of the earliest “analytic philosophers” (see AUSTIN and WITTGENSTEIN). The proponents of these influential doctrines all thought (albeit for different reasons) that the traditional questions of metaphysics were misguided, unanswerable, nonsensical.

Further, the reputation of metaphysics was poorly served by the obscurity of many of its most well-known practitioners. Clarity of exposition was not among the virtues exemplified by Royce, Bradley, Bosanquet, Bergson, Whitehead – names that *meant* metaphysics at the time. To the skeptical, it could easily seem that the recipe for success in metaphysics was this: (1) invent your own baroque ontological scheme, using a new,

peculiar jargon; (2) claim that it is radically opposed to all preceding metaphysical systems; and (3) explain its intricacies by the introduction of further undefined technical terms in a series of ever longer books. Chisholm's chief contribution to contemporary metaphysics was to show, by precept and, more importantly, by example that it is possible to construct metaphysical systems on a grand scale without falling into these vices. He championed a chastened approach to metaphysics, one that neither shies away from the traditional problems of ontology, nor falls back into the arcane, untethered system-building that had given metaphysics a bad name.

The comparison with Quine

W. V. Quine began teaching at Harvard while Chisholm was a graduate student. Quine provided something that would prove crucial to Chisholm's metaphysical program: the approach to questions of ontological commitment defended in "On What There Is" (1948), but already in place by 1939, when Chisholm was a student (Quine 1939). Chisholm took Quine's criterion of ontological commitment to amount to the following injunction: If one affirms a statement using a name or other singular term, or an initial phrase of "existential quantification," like "There are some so-and-so's" (see QUINE), then one must either (1) admit that one is committed to the existence of things answering to the singular term or satisfying the description, or (2) provide a "paraphrase" of the statement that eschews singular terms and quantification over so-and-so's. Both Quine and Chisholm agree that Meinong, who affirms truths about all sorts of things which he then admits do not exist, is trying to have his cake and eat it too; Meinong must be resisted if metaphysics is to be kept honest.

Chisholm's metaphysics looks nothing like Quine's, however. For Quine, it is the deliverances of science alone that need be taken into account when attempting to work out one's ontological commitments; he identifies the project of "limning the true and ultimate structure of reality" with that of working out the most ontologically austere regimentation of the language of the harder sciences. This enables Quine to keep his ontology lean, including nothing but the most well-understood, sharply demarcated things: ultimately, nothing but concrete spatiotemporal entities and the abstract but well-defined world of set theory. But the cost is great: the repudiation of quite a lot of what we would ordinarily regard as truisms about beliefs, desires, and other intentional attitudes; about what must or might be the case; about what would have happened if . . . ; and so on (see, e.g., Quine 1960). Chisholm, however, asks: Why not assume, in the seminar room, the same things we take ourselves to know in everyday life? Why, when we do philosophy, should we appeal to nothing but what we find in our physics and chemistry textbooks? Chisholm rejects Quine's skepticism toward all but science; an ontological scheme must show its adequacy on a much broader playing field.

Both Chisholm and Quine agree that ontological schemes are to be judged by the competing desiderata of simplicity and sufficiency of scope. One scheme is simpler than another if it posits fewer, and better understood, types of entities. One scheme is superior to another in scope insofar as it allows for the statement of satisfactory philosophical theories on more subjects, theories that preserve, sometimes in the face of apparent contradiction or philosophical puzzlement, most of what we take ourselves to know.

Quine's austere ontological naturalism is purchased at the cost of severe restrictions on the scope of what we may reasonably take ourselves to know. Although one cannot accept the mathematics needed for science without set theory, no further "queer entities" need be recognized by one who affirms nothing but the deliverances of the (sufficiently hard) sciences. Chisholm, however, has many more truths to consider; for him, balancing the competing desiderata of simplicity of scheme and sufficiency of scope is much trickier. The adequacy of an ontological scheme comes to turn upon its role in the resolution of the traditional problems of philosophy, most of which Quine was able to sidestep by rejecting the commonsensical convictions from which the problems arise.

It is no surprise, then, to find the two philosophers differing drastically despite their initial point of agreement. Chisholm finds that one cannot arrive at metaphysical theories satisfying both desiderata of simplicity and scope without making reference to things not found in Quine's ontology, such as "intensional objects." He can find no ontologically perspicuous theory that does justice to what we know about persons while eschewing irreducibly intentional (psychological) notions (e.g. "conceiving," "attributing"). Ultimately, he concludes that persons must be very special indeed: they have causal powers unlike those found elsewhere in nature, they can "grasp" or conceive of abstract objects, and their persistence conditions are mysteriously different from those of ordinary physical objects. Quine, and many other naturalistically inclined philosophers, will find such conclusions fantastical. Be that as it may, the theories Chisholm constructs offer solutions to a host of philosophical problems; and his metaphysical program stands as a challenge to be met by those who would be more naturalistic or nominalistic than Chisholm, but who are not prepared to retreat into a skepticism as radical as Quine's.

Chisholmian methodology illustrated: states of affairs as necessary things

Chisholm's ontological views underwent frequent revision, as one or another scheme proved inadequate in scope, unable to make room for enough of what we take ourselves to know; or as he thought of some way to keep a plausible philosophical theory in place while simplifying its ontological commitments. One of the more radical changes was the rejection of "states of affairs" in the early 1980s. It provides a good example of Chisholm's effort to make systematic metaphysics responsible by tying ontology to the resolution of a wide spectrum of philosophical problems. In this case, the change was brought about by problems of self-reference.

The greatest ontological divide in Chisholm's theory of categories is between necessary things and contingent things. The states of affairs so central to Chisholm's ontology throughout the 1960s and 1970s were taken to be necessary things.

Chisholm advanced several ways of marking the distinction between necessary and contingent things. He hoped to restrict his modal primitives to those expressible by means of one locution: " x is necessarily such that it is F ," where " F " can be replaced by any predicate, and the phrase is equivalent to " x is necessarily such that it exists if and only if it is F ." (Something is possibly F , of course, if and only if it is not necessarily not F .) But then, even if "exists" were allowed as a predicate substitutable for F , replacing F with "exists" yields only a sense of "necessarily existing" according to

which *everything* exists necessarily. One proposal for making the distinction within his restricted vocabulary is this: contingent things are possibly such as to be coming into existence or passing away (i.e. possibly such as to have had no properties and possibly such as to be going to have no properties) and necessary things are neither (cf. 1989b: 164, and 1996: 127). This presupposes that there are no things that could have failed to exist but that, given that they do exist, cannot possibly be created or destroyed. Some might have doubts about this assumption. Chisholm may have doubted it himself, since he tried other ways of making the distinction.

Another proposed mark of the necessary/contingent divide is this: x is necessary if and only if x has a property that is essential to it and that nothing else could possibly have (i.e. a property that is an individual essence of x); and everything is such that something has that property (1986: 26). This presupposes that every necessary thing has an individual essence. Perhaps Chisholm had doubts about this assumption, too; for his last attempt to formulate a criterion for the necessary existence of a thing, x , was: "There is an attribute that is such that (1) everything is necessarily such that there is something having that attribute, (2) x is necessarily such that it has that attribute, and (3) that attribute is not necessarily had by everything" (1996: 17). Counterexamples are generated if one allows for disjunctive properties such as *being either an animal or prime*. But Chisholm also developed theories of the structure of properties, including accounts of what it is for a property to be a disjunction of two others. Perhaps he would have found the resources there to refine his last definition so as to rule out such counterexamples.

Chisholm long held that there were at least two sorts of necessary thing: states of affairs and properties or attributes. (He always at least left an opening in his table of the categories for a third, as well: God, a necessary substance upon which all else depends.) He advocates an "intentional approach" to both states of affairs and properties; that is, he claims that their criteria of identity and structural features can only be adequately described using intentional terms, such as "believing" and "conceiving." States of affairs are defined as those things which one may believe (1976: 117), properties as those things which one may believe to be exemplified by other things (1996: 29). Both are given intentional criteria of identity. A state of affairs p is identical with a state of affairs q if and only if, necessarily, (1) p "obtains" or "occurs" if and only if q does (1976: 118); and (2) whoever believes p believes q , and vice versa. A property F is identical with a property G if and only if, necessarily, (1) something exemplifies F if and only if it exemplifies G , and (2) whoever conceives F conceives G , and vice versa (1989b: 145). *Propositions* are identified with states of affairs that either always obtain or never obtain, *events* with obtaining states of affairs that are not propositions and that entail the exemplification of a certain sort of property – a property "rooted in" the time at which it is exemplified.

Chisholm's ontology is "realist" in several senses of the term. It includes properties that, like Plato's universals, exist whether or not they are exemplified. It is opposed to psychologism and linguisticism about the subject matter of logic. Logic discovers necessary relations among *propositions*: necessarily existing states of affairs, in no sense mind-dependent or language-dependent. Indeed, the true propositions are not to be distinguished from *facts*. And so Chisholm advocates what is sometimes called an "iden-

tity theory of truth”: true propositions “correspond with facts in the fullest sense that is possible, for they *are* facts” (1977: 88).

The first person and the rejection of haecceities

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s states of affairs figure prominently in Chisholm’s metaphysics, epistemology, and metaethics. Here are some examples of the many duties they perform. Statements about particular occurrences of a given type of event are to be paraphrased in terms of the “obtaining” of abstract, eternal states of affairs. And a causal relation between a pair of events is really a matter of two states of affairs being causally related *relative to a certain time*. On this approach, there is no need to recognize an ontological category of “tropes” or “particularized properties” in addition to states of affairs and properties conceived as Platonic universals (1976: ch. IV). “Times” are given a gloss much like A. N. Prior’s: they are maximal, consistent states of affairs, complete ways the world could be “all at once” (1979a: 357). Belief and other propositional attitudes are said to be relations between thinkers and states of affairs (1976: ch. IV). More generally, a relatively simple ontology of properties, states of affairs, and contingent, persisting individual things appears to be adequate to the formulation of philosophical theories across the whole range of subjects Chisholm addressed in this period.

The phenomenon of first person reference subjected the ontology of states of affairs to considerable strain. If propositional attitudes are relations between thinkers and states of affairs, what states of affairs are implicated in those attitudes expressed using the first person pronoun? Ernst Mach catches sight of himself in a mirror without realizing who it is, and thinks: “That is a shabby pedagogue,” without thinking: “I am a shabby pedagogue.” The contents of the two attitudes differ; but how is this difference to be reflected as a difference in the structures of states of affairs, as it must be on Chisholm’s theory? Since states of affairs are necessary things, their constituents, too, must be necessary existents. The only way, then, for a state of affairs to be *about* some contingent thing is for it to contain an “individual concept” of that thing: a property only one thing could have, and one that is had by that thing. But what individual concept is involved in my first person thoughts? What extra property is there in the state of affairs *I am a shabby pedagogue* that is not present in *Someone is a shabby pedagogue*? Surely I need not know anything about my relations to other things in order to think a first person thought; so it must be some intrinsic property, peculiar to me, that enables me to think of myself in this way. And so Chisholm is led to accept the notion that each person has an “haecceity,” an individual essence peculiar to him or her, and “repugnant to” everything else (1976: ch. I).

Chisholm gradually came to feel that introducing haecceities for this purpose was a cheat. Although extraordinarily useful, haecceities remain, at bottom, utterly mysterious. We cannot rest content with simply positing their existence on the basis of their usefulness, since a part of their use is supposed to be their accessibility to intellectual grasp by the thinking things that exemplify them:

If this essentialistic theory were true, then every time a person expresses himself by means of an I-sentence he grasps his own essence or haecceity. But, one wonders, do I *ever* thus grasp my own individual essence or haecceity? If I do ever grasp it, shouldn’t I be able to

single out its various marks? . . . [I]f I can grasp my individual essence, then I ought also to be able to single out in it those features that are unique to it. If *being me* is my individual essence and *being you* is yours, then, presumably, each analyses into personhood and something else as well – one something else in my case and another in yours. But I haven't the faintest idea what this something else might be. . . .

I think that Brentano was right about this point. He said that, when we consider the nature of ourselves, we *never* grasp any properties that are individuating. Any property I know myself to have is one which is such that some entity other than I could also have that property. (1979a: 322)

The phenomenological inadequacy of the haecceity theory led Chisholm to rethink problems of self-reference, looking for an haecceity-free theory that would allow for the distinctions we actually make among self-directed beliefs. What resulted was the “direct attribution” theory of belief: the objects of the so-called propositional attitudes are really *properties*, and the things that are true and false (in at least one primary sense) are *direct attributions* of properties to oneself (Chisholm 1979b, 1981). (David Lewis reached the same conclusion independently: Lewis 1979.) Forced to regard the objects of belief, hope, wonderment, etc. as properties in at least those cases ascribable by means of an indirect reflexive (“she, herself,” “he, himself”), Chisholm (and Lewis) advocate treating all believing, etc. as a matter of the self-ascription of properties. When a person believes that she, herself, is mortal, she self-ascribes the property of mortality. When she believes, with respect to her father, that he is mortal, what is happening is this: she self-ascribes a property that implies that there is some relation holding between her and only one other person, and that person is mortal; and her father in fact stands in that relation to her. When she believes that someone (or other) is mortal, she self-ascribes a simpler property: *being such that someone is mortal*.

In *The First Person*, Chisholm works out interpretations of demonstratives, of proper names, and of sense and reference, in terms of the self-ascription of properties. As in his correspondence with Sellars (Chisholm 1957a), he defends the primacy of psychological intentionality over linguistic intentionality: we conceive of and self-ascribe properties that allow us to single out other things (cf. SELLARS), and we use words to cause others to conceive of and self-ascribe properties that single out the same things. In Chisholm's view, there is no way to avoid positing an irreducible intentional relation, such as “conceiving,” that relates thinkers to extramental things (properties and, indirectly, other individuals) – a relation that cannot be identified with an ability to manipulate words in either a public language or an inner “language of thought.”

The unraveling of the ontology of states of affairs

At first, the new account of the propositional attitudes sent relatively minor ripples through Chisholm's system, as he examined the extent to which the change called for modifications of his views in epistemology (1982: ch. 1), action theory, axiology, and ethics, and of his resolution of the paradox of analysis (1986). In these areas, there was little change in fundamental doctrine. But a fairly radical rethinking of his theory of events and causation was called for. The self-ascription account of thinking solves problems with the older, propositional account by rejecting the received opinion that truth and falsity are, at bottom, properties of propositions. In order to give a unified

theory of truth and falsehood, Chisholm adopts what he calls a “doxastic theory of truth,” not unlike Russell’s “multiple relation theory of judgment” (Russell 1910): it is beliefs or judgments that are true and false in the “primary sense”; the truth and falsity of other things is to be explicated in terms of the sense in which beliefs are true and false (1993, 1986: 23). This strips the old states of affairs of two of their most important functions: as the things that are, at bottom, true and false; and as the objects of propositional attitudes. Furthermore, now that haecceities have been rejected, no necessarily existent state of affairs can, in any obvious way, imply the existence of contingent particulars; so states of affairs are inadequate vehicles of truth and falsehood in all but the most abstract or general cases. States of affairs become a third wheel within the theory of the true and false, and are eventually jettisoned.

But states of affairs had played a dual role, as both objects of propositional attitudes and, when true, worldly facts and events. Formerly, the bearers of truth and falsehood were propositions, which were a category of states of affairs; and states of affairs (when they obtained) were not to be distinguished from facts. When the bearers of truth and falsehood are doxastic – acts of judgment – no simple identification of the bearers of truth with facts or events is possible. Many facts and events have nothing to do with judgments or thinkers. Something must be introduced to play the roles of *fact* and *event* in the new ontology: those things in virtue of which acts of judgment are true or false, and the sorts of things that are causes and effects. And so Chisholm introduces a new category, that of *states*: contingently existing structures that are made out of things and properties, and that exist only if the things have the relevant properties (1990, 1996).

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