



Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

The First Person: An Essay on Reference and Intentionality. by Roderick M. Chisholm
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Roderick M. Chisholm, *The First Person: An Essay on Reference and Intentionality* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1981), vii + 135 pp.

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The primary topic of this short, difficult, and important book is intentionality. Its author's project is to answer the question, 'How is it possible for one thing to direct its thoughts upon another thing?' and, having done this, to explore the implications of his answer for certain areas of philosophy (such as the theory of knowledge) in which an important role is played by the notion of a thinker's thoughts about objects.

The book consists of nine chapters and an appendix.

The first chapter is introductory. In the second chapter and the appendix, Chisholm presents the elements of a theory of abstract objects—that is, properties, relations and states of affairs.

In chapters 3 through 6, Chisholm develops a theory of intentionality, a theory of how thinkers manage to refer to things and to attribute properties to themselves and to other things. This theory conforms to the very stringent requirements of Chisholm's ontology of abstract objects. Throughout these chapters, Chisholm holds to the thesis he calls 'the primacy of the intentional' (*sc.* over the linguistic). That is, he assumes that the activities of making reference and attributing properties are more fundamental than and prior to language, and that linguistic reference and attribution are to be explained in terms of the innate referential and attributive powers of the mind. Having presented a language-independent theory of reference and property-attribution, Chisholm goes on to apply this theory to the task of explaining various devices that speakers use to communicate their thoughts about objects, especially certain devices that have played prominent roles in recent philosophy of language and metaphysics: demonstratives (including 'I'), the emphatic reflexive ('he himself'), and proper names.

In chapters 7, 8, and 9, Chisholm develops a theory of the unity of consciousness, a theory of knowledge, and a theory of the nature of the *de re - de dicto* distinction. These theories conform to the very stringent requirements of Chisholm's theory of intentionality.

ONTOLOGY

Chisholm's ontology of abstract or non-individual objects includes only what he calls "Platonic" objects, that is, objects that can be "conceived" without reference to particular individuals. (One "conceives" a given abstract object when one actively considers it, holds it before one's mind, or grasps it in occurrent thought. 'Conceive', in this sense, is one of Chisholm's undefined terms. In my opinion, the book would have benefited from a more extensive discussion of this term. We should note that, according to Chisholm, one "conceives" the property *being red* when one,

e.g., considers picking a red rose: to conceive this property, one need not entertain a thought that would require a noun-phrase like 'the property *being red*' for its linguistic expression. The same point applies to other sorts of abstract objects, such as relations and states of affairs.) If all abstract objects are "Platonic" in this sense, then it is doubtful whether there are any "haecceities" or "individual essences" of concrete objects (like "the property of being identical with me") or any propositions like "the proposition that you are wise." For if there were any such things, it would seem, one could conceive them only *via* reference to particular concrete individuals. One could not, for example, conceive the property of being identical with me unless I existed and one could in some way refer to me.¹

INTENTIONALITY

How does one manage to refer to things in thought and to attribute properties to them? Chisholm's answer is that, without exception, one's acts of reference and attribution are acts of attributing properties to oneself. A. *Pre-linguistic considerations.* For the sake of compactness, I shall use the following method of constructing terms that (purport to) name properties. I shall write 'Px'—read: 'the property of being an *x* such that'—followed by a sentence in which no variable other than '*x*' is free. (And similarly for 'Py' and 'y', 'Pz' and 'z', and so on.)

Now let us say that someone *directly attributes* a property if he believes himself to have that property, or believes of that property that he himself possesses it. By definition, then, certain belief-statements can be expressed in the language of direct attribution. We can, for example, render the statement that so-and-so believes himself to be wise by saying that so-and-so directly attributes wisdom, or directly attributes Px *x* is wise. And we can easily translate any *de dicto* belief statement—or, at least, any *de dicto* belief statement whose *dictum* is expressible in Platonic or purely qualitative terms—by a generalization of the following device: we render the statement that so-and-so believes that all men are mortal by the statement that so-and-so directly attributes *being such that all men are mortal*; that is, Px all men are mortal.² (If someone directly attributes this property, then we may say that he *accepts* the proposition that all men are mortal or that he believes that all men are mortal. But not all direct attribution can be said to involve propositional acceptance. If someone directly attributes wisdom, we may not say that he "accepts the proposition that he is wise," for there is no such proposition. We *may* say that he "believes that he is wise," but we must not take this to mean that there is a certain proposition about himself that he accepts.) A similar treatment could be provided for statements involving other propositional attitudes than belief ('. . . fears that . . .'; '. . . wonders whether . . .') but we shall not attempt this here.

Now suppose that someone believes that the tallest woman is wise; that is, suppose that he directly attributes Px the tallest woman is wise. Then we may say that he *indirectly attributes* Px (*x* is wise) to the tallest woman. Similarly, if someone directly attributes Px (the only woman before

x is wise) then, if there is only one woman before him, he indirectly attributes Px (x is wise) to her. And, in the former case, if she is also the richest woman, we may say correctly that he indirectly attributes wisdom to the richest woman, or, better, that the richest woman is such that he indirectly attributes wisdom to her, even if he has no opinion about how rich the tallest woman is. Or we may make use of a currently popular way of talking, and describe this situation by saying that he indirectly attributes wisdom to the richest woman *under the description* 'the tallest woman'. Chisholm's definition of indirect attribution is complex—not unnecessarily so, I think—and I will not reproduce it,³ but these examples should convey the general idea behind the words 'indirect attribution' with enough precision for our purposes. Indirect attribution provides us with an answer to the question, How does one refer to and ascribe properties to things?

Here, then, we have a procedure for answering the question . . . 'What makes my idea of him an idea of *him*?', and we can answer it without appealing to words or terms that refer to him. . . : 'There is a certain relation I bear just to him; and I directly attribute . . . the property of bearing that relation to just one thing' . . .

But to the question: 'What makes his *direct* attribution of a property . . . an attribution of a property to *him*?' there can be no answer at all, beyond that of 'He just does—and that is the end of the matter!' It is important to see that *every* theory of reference and intentionality is such that, at some point, it must provide a similar answer: 'It just does'. Thus, according to the propositional theory of belief, I make *me* my object by making certain propositions my object. And how do I make those propositions my object? The answer must be that I do this directly—and not via some other thing which I have made my object. (p. 32)

Now one might suspect that the language of direct and indirect attribution was not sufficiently expressive to enable its user to say all the things about beliefs that can be said in ordinary English. One might be particularly suspicious about whether what is expressed by sentences of ordinary English that involve quantification over propositions—or which have a surface-structure that suggests that they should be interpreted as involving this feature—can be expressed in the language of attribution. I do not think that these suspicions will prove to be correct. While I cannot demonstrate this, I offer a few paraphrases that may suggest something of the power and flexibility of the notion of attribution. (These paraphrases are my own; Chisholm does not consider cases like these. But I believe he would accept them.)

Some of A's beliefs are inconsistent with some of B's beliefs.

$\exists x \exists y$ (A directly attributes x and B directly attributes y and it is not possible that $(\exists z$ (z has x) and $\exists w$ w has y)).

If Aristotle believes that he is a philosopher and Plato believes that all philosophers are wise and Socrates believes that no one is wise, then one of them has a false belief.

If Aristotle directly attributes Px (x is a philosopher) and Plato directly attributes Px (all philosophers are wise) and Socrates directly attributes Px (no one is wise), then either there is a property that Aristotle directly attributes and does not have or there is a property that Plato directly attributes and does not have or there is a property that Socrates directly attributes and does not have.

Peirce believes that some of the things he believes are false.

Peirce directly attributes $Px \exists y$ (x directly attributes y and x does not have y).⁴

B. *Linguistic Considerations*

1. *Demonstratives*. We shall consider only 'I', 'you', 'it', 'that', and 'this'. One might ask concerning sentences containing these words what propositions they express, or what propositions particular speakers *would* express by using them in particular contexts. But no proposition is expressed by (a particular utterance of) 'I am tired', for there are no first-person propositions. And no proposition is expressed by a particular utterance of 'That man is tired', for there are no singular or non-Platonic propositions. Instead of asking what propositions these sentences express, we could more profitably ask what their primary use in English is. (By the "primary" use of an expression, we mean the use by means of which all its other uses can be explained.) This question is not a disguised way of asking of what propositions they are customarily used to express. We can ask of, e.g., 'Something is red' both what proposition it is customarily used to express *and* what its primary use is. The answer to the former question is: the proposition that something is red; the answer to the latter question is: expressing the following property of its utterer: accepting the proposition that something is red. We might compare this with the following statement: the primary use of a sheriff's star is: expressing the following property of its wearer: being a sheriff. And just as one might put a sheriff's star to its primary use without being a sheriff (say, when falsely representing oneself as a sheriff), so one might put 'Something is red' to its primary use without accepting the proposition that something is red. (Chisholm's words 'expressing the following property of its utterer' are therefore somewhat misleading, since the property the utterer of a sentence in this sense "expresses" may not *be* one of his properties. In a footnote, Chisholm suggests a more serviceable formula, 'being used to purport to express the following property of its utterer'. I would suggest 'representing its utterer as having the following property'.) And, similarly, we may say that the primary use of 'I am wise' is: expressing the following property of its utterer: directly attributing wisdom.

Though Chisholm does not put matters this way, we may grasp the essence of his theory of demonstratives by noting that it would be possible entirely to dispense with the use of demonstratives in favor of the following practice: naming a (Platonic) property while making a gesture the conventionally determined use of which is to represent the maker of the gesture as directly attributing the property he is simultaneously naming. (It will

be important to keep the following point about this practice constantly in mind: to make the conventional gesture is not directly to attribute the property named—or any other property—but rather to *represent* oneself as a person who, quite independently of that gesture, directly attributes that property; attribution, direct or indirect, is internal. One may directly attribute a property without representing oneself as doing so, and one may represent oneself as directly attributing a property that one does not directly attribute.) Let the gesture be a hand-raising: by saying a property-name, the speaker calls attention to the property named; by raising his hand, he calls attention to himself; by doing both at the same time he represents the person he has called attention to as directly attributing the property he has called attention to. Our use of a gesture as a conventional device for directing one's audience's attention to oneself—rather than a vocalization like uttering 'I'—has this pedagogical advantage: no *word* figures in the attention-directing device, and thus no word tempts us to ask of it, "What is its sense?" Let us further suppose that in written English we use the writing of '*' in place of a hand-raising. (We must remember that '*' is not a pronoun but, if we *must* classify it as a "part of speech," an expletive.)

Here are some examples of sentences consisting of '*' followed by a name of a Platonic property—that is, examples of '*Px' followed by a sentence in which no variable other than 'x' is free⁵—that can serve as replacements (replacements having the same primary use) for various English sentences containing demonstratives. Thus we display the use—the "meaning," insofar as the notion has any application—of demonstratives. I write the ordinary sentence first and follow it with its "translation."

I am wise⁶

*Px (*x* is wise)

I am wiser than you (sing.)

*Px (*x* is wiser than the person *x* is addressing)

I believe that I am wise

*Px (*x* directly attributes Py (*y* is wise))

I believe that it is older than I am

*Px (*x* directly attributes Py (the thing that is now salient for *y* and *y*'s audience is older than *y*))

I believe something I once denied

*Px $\bar{\Delta}y$ (*x* directly attributes *y* and *x* once directly attributed the negation of *y*)⁷

That is your (sing.) cow

*Px (the thing that *x* is calling attention to is a cow and belongs to the person *x* is addressing)⁸

This is identical with that

*Px (the thing *x* is now calling attention to is identical with the last thing *x* called attention to).⁹

2. *Proper Names*. Chisholm's theory of proper names, like his theory of demonstratives, must be consistent with the assumption that there are

no non-Platonic propositions and no haecceities.¹⁰

The best way to give a brief presentation of Chisholm's theory of proper names is, I think, to ask what instructions we should give to someone in order to enable him to understand a speaker who utters English sentences containing proper names. I shall assume that these instructions are addressed to someone who has at his disposal Chisholm's apparatus for describing intentional states. Let us suppose that an English speaker has just said, addressing a certain audience, "Tom is standing." We may render this speech-act intelligible to someone who has not hitherto encountered proper names, by means of the following statements and instructions.

(1) The speaker believes or assumes that his uttering the word 'Tom' will call exactly one thing to the attention of those he is addressing.

(2) Now consider the thing he has called his audience's attention to by uttering the word 'Tom' (assuming there is such a thing). In following this utterance with an utterance of 'is standing', he is—by means of a linguistic convention—representing himself to his audience as someone who indirectly attributes the property expressed by that predicate to that thing.

(3) The speaker, in uttering 'Tom is standing', is, by means of a linguistic convention, representing himself as one who directly attributes Px (x is using 'Tom' to call attention to the thing x usually uses 'Tom' to call attention to).

This explanation could easily be generalized to cover more complicated utterances involving proper names.

The theory embodied in this explanation can be applied to many philosophical problems and puzzles involving proper names. Consider, for example, the question whether a proper name has a *sense*. We must make some distinctions.

Proper names do not have an *attributive sense*. That is, there is no property that is *necessarily* expressed by that name when it is used to refer to a given individual, and which the speaker's audience must conceive if it is to understand his utterance. For what could the attributive sense of 'Tom' be if not Px ($x = \text{Tom}$)? And there is no such property.

When the speaker is representing himself as indirectly attributing *being standing* to the thing he has called his audience's attention to by uttering 'Tom', he must in some way be singling out that thing in his *own* mind—and he will not normally be singling it out as the thing he is calling his audience's attention to. For some relation R , he will be thinking of that thing as the one thing he bears R to. We may say that, on that occasion, the relational property *bearing R to exactly one thing* is the *speaker's demonstrative sense* of 'Tom'. Now consider a member of the audience. If the speaker's utterance of 'Tom' has indeed had the effect of calling that person's attention to exactly one thing (just the thing the speaker is thinking of, unless there has been a failure of communication), the hearer must in some way be singling out that thing in his own mind—and he will not normally be singling it out as the thing the speaker is calling attention to. For some relation R , he will be thinking of that thing as the one thing

he bears \acute{R} to. We may say that, on that occasion, the relational property bearing \acute{R} to exactly one thing is the hearer's demonstrative sense of 'Tom'.

Finally, we may say that Px (x is using 'Tom' to call attention to the thing x usually uses 'Tom' to call attention to) is the secondary sense of 'Tom'. Unlike the demonstrative senses of a proper name, the secondary sense is independent of context.

It should be evident that if Chisholm is right, then many famous problems and puzzles involving proper names—such as Kripke's puzzle about Pierre—depend on false presuppositions about proper names. Usually the presupposition is that a sentence involving a proper name (like 'London is pretty') expresses a certain non-Platonic proposition, and, moreover, always expresses the same proposition in any context in which the proper names it contains refer to the same objects. (Chapter 6 contains an interesting discussion of the puzzle of Pierre as well as discussions of various related topics, such as mistaken indication, negative singular existentials, and rigid designators.)

I have concentrated in this review on summarizing some of what Chisholm says in the first two-thirds of his book. I have said nothing about his important discussions of the unity of consciousness, knowledge, or the *de re-de dicto* distinction. Moreover, my summaries cannot convey the richness and sophistication of the discussions they summarize. They are intended to whet the potential reader's appetite and to help the actual reader to avoid some misinterpretations that I fell into on my first reading of the book.

NOTES

¹But there are philosophers who would deny this. Alvin Plantinga, for example, believes that there is such a property as *being identical with me*, that there are properties that are of the same sort as it but are such that there is nothing that has them, and that there not only could be but is a being who conceives them.

²Cf. David Lewis, "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*," *The Philosophical Review* LXXXVIII, no. 4 (October 1979).

³Roughly speaking, to attribute the property x indirectly is, for some relation R , to attribute directly P_y (y bears R to exactly one thing, a thing that has x).

⁴I will not discuss in this review the question (which Chisholm considers in Chapter 9) of how to rewrite those sentences of English that, according to the common philosophical parlance, "express *de re* beliefs."

⁵And, of course, "*" may not occur inside a property-name. That would make no sense at all.

⁶This and the subsequent "translations" can be used as replacements for the sentences they translate only when those sentences occur as complete sentences and not as parts of longer sentences. For example, we translate 'It is false that I am wise' not as 'It is false that * Px (x is wise)', which is meaningless, but as '* Px (it is false that x is wise)'.

⁷Depending on what we take the English sentence to mean, we might want to add 'and y is necessarily such that a thing either always has it or never has it'.

⁸As with the original, an utterance of this sentence would probably be accompanied by an ostensive gesture intended to call attention to a certain cow.

⁹The word 'now' in this sentence is really superfluous. In any case, it is not a demonstrative, but a sort of signal, like 'When!' uttered in response to the invitation 'Say when'. An utterer of the translation is to be imagined as making two ostensive gestures, one preceding and one simultaneous with his utterance of 'now'.

¹⁰That is, no haecceities of concrete individuals. Chisholm in fact *defines* an abstract object as a thing that has a necessarily instantiated haecceity. I should like to point out, by the way, that this is a real English word and has a standard pronunciation: HEK-SEE-UH-TEE. See, e.g., *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (New York and London: 1929).

Hyman Gross, *A Theory of Criminal Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), xviii + 521 pp., \$17.50.

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1. "It is his enormous mistake which is great," Wittgenstein said of an author. "I.e. roughly speaking if you just add a '~' to the whole book it says an important truth." (Wittgenstein, p. 159) It is evident early in *A Theory of Criminal Justice* the remark does not apply to Gross. The danger instead is the book will be necessarily true, containing only sentences like one beginning, "Seizing and removing dangerous people makes the social environment that much safer. . . ." (p. 34) It did not go on this way though.

The bibliography of the book (501 items) says much about it. The author cites legal journals somewhat more often than philosophical journals, but cites both frequently. The most frequently cited philosophical journal is *Mind*; articles referred to in other philosophical journals are most often the sort that show up in *Mind*, although a paper by Davidson is cited too. From a philosophical point of view, Gross does an ordinary sort of legal and moral philosophy, mostly unassisted by recent very different work in general philosophy (when I was asked to review the book a colleague remarked he had not realized *Noûs* reviewed this sort of thing; nevertheless Gross cites *Noûs* twice, thus .004 of the work is informed by it). There are similar lacunae from a legal point of view. Hare has remarked that economic theory etc. "*are* the stuff of politics nowadays," and that "the philosophers are marching towards the sound of the guns." (Hare, 1978, p. 155) The lawyers are doing the shooting. Much recent work in legal theory looks a lot like mathematical economics, albeit the mathematical economics of Milton Friedman; Gross avoids it.

2. Gross is least effective when he should be using this legal material. The first problem he must address, and does address, is why there is criminal law at all. Gross takes more for granted here than we might wish. He believes crime is something given, not something created by criminal law. He says, "no one needs to consult the law to know that murder, rape, and theft are criminal acts." (p. 7) But it is less evident that one need not consult the law to know that killing, sexual relations without consent, and carrying away a cow are criminal acts. Rights seem to come