

INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

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In this paper I propose an amendment to Chisholm's definition of individual essence. I then argue that a thing has more than one individual essence and that there is no reason to believe no one grasps anyone else's essence. The remainder of the paper is devoted to a refutation of existentialism, the view that the essence of an object x (along with propositions and states of affairs directly about x) is ontologically dependent upon x in the sense that it could not have existed if x had not existed.

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The paper argues a certain parallelism between the *perception* and the *conception* of real-world objects. Just as the former is always incomplete, perspectival, and error-prone, so is the latter. We can never claim ultimate correctness for our conception of things. This fact is crucial for communication, because if our own conceptions were claimed as definitive, then we could never be secure in our confidence that we are in communicative touch with one another regarding a common, shared object of communication.

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States of affairs constitute a basic ontological category in Chisholm's metaphysical system, and yield *events* and *propositions* as subclasses. Qua events, they enter into causal relations, and qua propositions, they are objects of our intentional attitudes. This paper expounds and critically examines Chisholm's conception of a state of affairs and his constructions of events and propositions. Various difficulties with some of Chisholm's definitions and procedures are pointed out and discussed. The last section contains a set of suggested modifications to the theory to avoid these difficulties.

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Chisholm's ontological objective is the reductionist one of translating statements which appear to be about propositions and generic events into statements about states of affairs, denying the existence of concrete events altogether. The paper questions this program by criticising the notion of concretization on which Chisholm heavily relies. It is argued that there are no convincing arguments in favor of eliminative reductionism. Translability of statements about one kind of entity into statements about another kind of entity has nothing to do with what exists.

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In his book *Persons and Objects*, Professor Chisholm undertakes to show the satisfactoriness of an ontology which does not admit

the existence of concrete events, such as sneezings, runnings, etc. He attempts to show that if we allow the existence of states of affairs, these being everlastingly existing entities, we need not acknowledge the existence of those perishing entities which are concrete events. In this paper I discuss the tenability of this contention, considering especially whether the reductions that Chisholm offers cope satisfactorily with the phenomena of tense. I conclude that they do not. My conclusion is that, at this point in history, we do not know whether ontology can do without concrete events.

III. ACTION AND CAUSATION

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The fundamental causal concept in Chisholm's theory of agency is that of *causally contributing to*, a generic concept covering both event-causal contributors (members of sets of nonredundant jointly sufficient conditions) and agent-causal contributors (not members of sets of jointly sufficient conditions). Chisholm's elucidation of agent-causation is explored and defended against objections. It is then argued that Chisholm's ontology, in particular in its treatment of the concept of an event, generates difficulties for his theory of agency of which two are explored: (i) that it is hard to reconcile with Chisholm's own apparent analysis of the distinction between intentional and unintentional actions; and (ii) that it entails that every causal contributing has an infinite set of causal contributors, which is in conflict with the principle that any set of nonredundant conditions that are jointly sufficient for the occurrence of an event are so by the nature of things, and not by virtue of some further event.

IV. KNOWLEDGE

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Chisholm holds that each person's empirical knowledge is a structure resting on a foundation of self-presenting propositions. He also holds that a person's knowledge of the past and the external world cannot be inferred from his self-presenting propositions by

the rules of deduction and induction; special rules of evidence are needed. I argue that Chisholm has not made a compelling case for either view and that there is good reason to doubt that either view is correct.

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Two general approaches to the analysis of knowledge are distinguished: a liberal view that takes the truth of what is known as a condition independent of the justificatory condition, and a conservative view that regards the truth of what is known as implied by the level of justification required for knowledge. Chisholm is classified as a liberal on perceptual knowledge, and his analysis is criticized from a conservative standpoint.

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This paper is concerned with Chisholm's "adverbial theory of sensing". An attempt is made to give a literal statement of what it means "to sense redly" which is consistent with what Chisholm says about sensing and also meets various objections to adverbial theories. The paper concludes with a brief consideration of why it is that Chisholm does not offer an adverbial theory of perceiving, or of thinking in general, as well as of sensing.

David WIGGINS: Mereological Essentialism: Asymmetrical Essential Dependence and the Nature of Continuants 297

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