



Review: Critical Notice

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Critical Notice

Philosophical Papers, Volume I. By DAVID LEWIS. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. Pp. xii + 285.

David Lewis is one of the most able and original philosophers now writing. His ability is compounded of a truly formidable mastery of analytical technique, a prose style that is a model of grace and clarity, and what, for want of a better term for it, I must call organizational skill: his papers are so carefully and beautifully constructed that I doubt whether one could alter any of them significantly without making it significantly worse. And, as his readers know, he seems to have read everything. (Or everything written in the idiom of analytical philosophy. It would be fair to say, I think, that for Lewis the history of philosophy begins with Ramsey and Carnap.) As to his originality, while no one would dispute it, some philosophers might regard it as extreme. Some philosophers might charge that a good many of Lewis's theses are so excessively original that there is no possibility of anyone else's believing them.

A case in point would be his modal ontology. Many philosophers would agree with Lewis that it is profitable to think of necessary truth as truth in all possible worlds and of possible truth as truth in some possible world. But it is a plausible thesis that this agreement would be merely verbal. The many who talk of 'possible worlds' either regard such talk as a sort of ploy, a heuristic device that is useful in guiding our intuitions but which must be sternly banished from our finished theories, or else regard 'possible worlds' as abstractions of some sort—maximally consistent sets of propositions, perhaps. It is not so with Lewis.¹

For him the actual world is no such milk-and-water object as the set of all true propositions: it is the *universe*, the mereological sum of all the furniture of earth and all the choir of heaven. It is spread out in space and time and it has you and me and all things that are locatable or datable by reference to us and our lives as parts. Besides our own universe, the actual world, there are, according to Lewis a vast number of other universes—at least 2-to-the-*c* of them. These other universes, or non-actual worlds, differ from our own 'not in kind but in what goes on in them.'

There is, in fact, a universe (at least one) for every possible way a universe could be. These universes, or worlds, are separated one from the other simply in virtue of being spatio-temporally (and hence causally) unrelated to one another: if two objects are spatio-temporally related, then *ipso facto* they are not both worlds; rather, they are parts of the same world. *Our* world, of course, is the actual world. But that is an empty statement, for all that we mean by calling a world actual is that it is ours. Inhabitants of other worlds correctly call their worlds actual—that is, correctly call their worlds theirs. All modal facts (that it

¹ In the following exposition of Lewis's modal ontology, I draw upon several of the papers in the book under review, on *Counterfactuals*, and (to a very small extent) on *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

could have rained today; that the laws of physics are not in the strictest sense necessary truths; that there are six possible ways for a die to fall; that David Lewis might have been an aelurophobe) are facts about the relations that worlds and their parts bear to one another. For example, the fact that Lewis might have been an aelurophobe is the fact that someone who plays a role in some world that is, in some sense, the role Lewis plays in ours, has a strong aversion to the local cats. Thus, if Lewis is right, then all modal facts are in a very strong sense reducible to facts about the spatio-temporal relatedness or unrelatedness of objects. (This follows easily from his thesis that two possible objects belong to the same possible world if and only if they are spatio-temporally related.)² For instance, the fact that the laws of physics are not necessary truths is the same fact as the fact that somewhere, in a space-time spatio-temporally unrelated to ours, other laws of physics than ours hold.

It would be easy to infer from Lewis's talk of non-actual worlds and other possible but non-actual individuals (that is, proper parts of non-actual worlds), that he is a sort of Meinongian, that he believes in non-existent objects.³ It would, however, be wrong. Lewis believes as firmly as Quine that there are no things that do not exist—that everything exists. But, according to Lewis, among the things that exist are golden mountains. These splendid objects do not *actually* exist, however, for there are none to be found in the actual world. Lewis would say that this assertion about actual existence could profitably be compared with the following sentence about current existence: 'Among the things that exist are pterodactyls. They do not *currently* exist, however, for there are none to be found in the current era.' In everyday speech, of course, we can correctly say 'There are no pterodactyls', since context often restricts our universe of discourse to our contemporaries. But this is a matter of pragmatics, not of semantics or metaphysics, and it does not commit us to the thesis that 'there are things of which it is true that there are no such things'. And, according to Lewis, in everyday speech we can correctly say, 'There are no golden mountains', since context often restricts our universe of discourse to our world. This, too, is a matter of pragmatics, and is free of the faintest tincture of Meinongianism.

This modal ontology Lewis calls Extreme Modal Realism (as opposed to the 'Moderate Modal Realism' of Adams, Plantinga, Stalnaker, and Kripke, which takes 'possible worlds' to be states of affairs, or possible histories of *the* world, or some such abstract objects).⁴ If we conjoin Extreme Modal Realism with

² In *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Lewis considers the hypothesis that there are worlds in which no spatio-temporal relations obtain, but in which there are kinds of extrinsic relatedness that are analogous to—but different from—spatio-temporal relatedness. If there are such worlds—if there are kinds of relatedness that can do the same work as spatio-temporal relatedness—then it will *not* be true that two possible objects belong to the same world only if they are spatio-temporally related. It will, however, be true that two possible objects belong to the same world only if they are either spatio-temporally related or else are related by an extrinsic relation analogous to spatio-temporal relatedness. In that case two of our statements would have to be modified: 'worlds are separated in virtue of bearing no spatio-temporal (or analogous) relations to one another'; 'all modal facts are reducible to facts about the obtaining or non-obtaining of spatio-temporal (or analogous) relations among objects'.

³ See, for example, William G. Lycan, 'The Trouble with Possible Worlds', in Michael J. Loux, ed., *The Possible and the Actual* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U.P., 1979), p. 277 n.

⁴ The terms Moderate Modal Realism and Extreme Modal Realism are Stalnaker's. See his 'Possible Worlds', *Nous* 10 (1976), reprinted in Loux, ed., *op. cit.* In *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Lewis uses 'Ersatz Modal Realism' and 'Genuine Modal Realism'.

iterative set theory, about which Lewis is not terribly happy, but which he doesn't see how to do without, and with a very strong mereology of the sort embodied in the Leonard–Goodman Calculus of Individuals, we have the whole of Lewis's official ontology: there are individuals (including non-actual individuals: ones spatio-temporally unrelated to *us*) and there are the non-individuals, the sets that spill out of the Zermelo–Fraenkel cornucopia when the individuals are inserted at the small end. (I say his 'official' ontology because he thinks that there *might* be immanent universals, *à la* David Armstrong and 'tropes' *à la* D. C. Williams.) All the non-individuals that science or philosophy could ever need—unless they should need immanent universals or tropes—are, Lewis tells us, sets. Propositions, properties, relations-in-intention, and numbers are all of them sets. The proposition that all cats are mammals is the set of all worlds that have no feline, non-mammalian parts (it is a true proposition because *our* world has this feature);⁵ the property of being red—not to be confused with the immanent universal *red*, if there is such a thing—is the set of all red objects, actual or not (it is instantiated because some local objects belong to it).

I

The ontology I have outlined crops up frequently in the book under review. It is, in Lewis's words, one of the 'recurring themes that unify the papers in this volume'. (xi) The other themes embody controversial attitudes, theses, and programs, but are very far from being unique to Lewis's works. They are (I reproduce his own list):

Exploitation of the analogies between space, time, and modality.

Materialism, according to which physical science will, if successful, describe our world completely.

A broadly functionalist theory of mind, according to which mental states *qua* mental are realizers of roles specified in common-sense psychology.

Integration of formal semantics into a broader account of our use of language in social interaction.

Refusal to take language as a starting point in the analysis of thought and modality.

Philosophical Papers, Volume I comprises fifteen papers, all previously published, which I list in the Appendix. The papers deal with topics in ontology, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mind. (Papers on topics related to probability, counterfactual conditionals, and causation will appear in a second volume, which will have appeared before this review is published.) The papers have been reprinted without alteration (beyond the correction of misprints), but with numerous 'postscripts' containing Lewis's elaborations on and second thoughts about their matter. The postscripts add up to about a tenth of the book. I give more information about them in the Appendix.

It is not easy to decide on a plan around which to organize a review of this book. The obvious alternatives are all more or less unsatisfactory.

⁵ I said above that for Lewis the actual world is no such milk-and-water object as the set of all true propositions; I meant to compare what Lewis calls the actual world with a set of things having the properties most of us ascribe to propositions. There is, as we see, nothing milk-and-watery about what *Lewis* calls propositions.

One might discuss the 'recurring themes' listed above and go into detail about the ways which they unify the papers in the volume. In conjunction with this undertaking, one might try to devise some apt characterization of Lewis's philosophical method and to show how this method has influenced the papers. But it would be difficult to do this, owing to the fact that the papers are very complicated and various. Moreover, to the extent to which this task is possible, Lewis has carried it out in his excellent Introduction.

One might discuss that one of the recurring themes that is specifically Lewis's, the doctrine of Extreme Modal Realism. But, while Extreme Modal Realism is a pervasive presence in this book, it is discussed explicitly and systematically in only a few places. To write a review of *Philosophical Papers* that was devoted mainly to Extreme Modal Realism would be to ignore most of its content. An examination of Extreme Modal Realism is better left to the reviewers of *On the Plurality of Worlds*, which is an exposition and defence of that doctrine.

One might attempt to discuss individually all, or many, of the fifteen articles that compose the book. But the articles are simply too crammed with content for this to be possible. The embarrassment provided the reviewer by all these riches is aggravated by the fact that there is very little overlap among the articles. Lewis does not often repeat himself, and his second thoughts are generally on peripheral matters, finding their appropriate expression in postscripts rather than in new articles that cover old ground. The reviewer of Lewis's papers (*qua* reviewer if not *qua* reader) can only envy the reviewers of recent collections by Putnam and Davidson, both of whom are generous in providing the reviewer with opportunities to discuss the development of their thoughts on quantum logic or Convention T. Lewis's thoughts presumably develop; but, apparently, he does not publish them till they are done developing.

What I shall do is this. I shall pick one paper and discuss it in some detail. My only defence of this procedure is that it seems possible, and I can think of nothing else to do. I shall pick a paper that is (in my view) particularly important, addressed to questions that are of broad philosophical interest, and not old enough to have become a much-discussed classic (unlike, say, 'General Semantics', 'Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic', and 'Survival and Identity'). I shall discuss 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*'. (Despite the fact that my personal favourite is 'Holes'. This splendid paper is unfitted for my present purposes because (a) it was written jointly with Stephanie Lewis,⁶ and (b) if it is not a classic—it certainly *ought* to be at least a minor one—it is at any rate quite old, and it is only indirectly connected with the topics that have informed the body of David Lewis's philosophical writings during the last fifteen years.) In my exposition of this paper, I shall presuppose Extreme Modal Realism. Eventually I shall raise the question, To what extent can the substance of Lewis's article be disentangled from Extreme Modal Realism?

II

If one went by linguistic evidence alone, one might suppose that the objects of 'propositional attitudes' were ontologically quite various. A man may want a cat, fear a rise in prices, believe a rumour. . . . To suppose this, however, would be

⁶ 'Holes' is the only collaboration in the book.

to abandon the prospect of a philosophical theory of propositional attitudes; one would be reduced to Austinian lepidopterology. Most of us don't want that. We don't want nineteen kinds of things; we want three, or, much better, one. It is generally supposed that we can have just one: propositions. To want a cat is to desire that . . . [the blank is to be filled by a suitable declarative sentence; its suitability will derive partly from its containing the word 'cat']. To fear a rise in prices is to fear that prices may rise. To believe a rumour is to believe that . . . because a rumour that . . . is going round. More generally—so orthodoxy has it—if one wants, fears, and believes various things, those 'things' are all propositions. More exactly (since no one could want or fear a proposition *secundum litteram*)⁷ ascriptions of propositional attitudes to a subject can always be analysed in terms of the relations that subject bears to certain propositions. The fact that belief *et al.* are called *propositional* attitudes by philosophers is simply a terminological reflection of this conviction.

Lewis approves of the project of assigning the objects of 'propositional' attitudes to a single ontological category. He is convinced, however, that it is *properties* and not propositions that ought to be pressed into service as the sole objects of attitudes: the objects of attitudes ought not to be sets of possible worlds but sets of possible-objects-in-general. (Worlds are *maximal* possible objects, since the mereological sum of a world and anything not one of its parts is an *impossible* object, one that could not be actual.) The form of his argument is this: what sets of worlds can do, sets of possible-objects-in-general can always do; what sets of possible-objects-in-general can do, sets of worlds cannot always do. Let us see why.

Consider *belief*. All belief, Lewis says, can be regarded as belief '*de se*': as the self-ascription of a property. *De dicto* (or propositional) belief can be understood as consisting in the self-ascription of properties by the following device: to believe that *p* is to self-ascribe the property of inhabiting a world in which *p*. (What is self-ascription? Lewis perhaps does not sufficiently emphasize that self-ascription is not an action but a state. To say 'I am exhausted' is not to self-ascribe exhaustion; rather, to self-ascribe exhaustion is to believe oneself to be exhausted. The malingerer says 'I am exhausted', when he does *not* self-ascribe exhaustion.) To hold a *de dicto* belief, therefore, is to see oneself as located within a certain region of logical space. Since a region of logical space is a proposition, we may (though we need not) regard a certain proposition as a secondary or derivative object of a belief. If someone believes that horses can fly, the primary object of his belief is the property of inhabiting a world in which horses can fly; but we are free, if we like, to say that a certain region of logical space, the set of all worlds in which horses can fly (the proposition that horses can fly), is a secondary or derivative object of his belief.

There is other belief than *de dicto* or propositional belief.⁸ There are other

⁷ In *my* idiolect, moreover, one does not *believe* propositions; one *accepts* or *assents* to them. I gather that a lot of people don't hear things that way. In the sequel, I shall sometimes speak with the vulgar.

⁸ But there is no *de re* belief. '*De re*', for Lewis, categorizes a way in which beliefs can be described or reported, rather than a way in which things are believed. The sentence 'The Taj Mahal is such that Alice believes of it that it is white' is a *de re* belief-report, but it is not a report of a certain woman's '*de re* belief'. The report is to be analysed along these lines: For some relation of acquaintance R, Alice bears R only to the Taj Mahal, and Alice self-ascribes the property of bearing R only to something white.

ways of being located than within logical space. These two facts are deeply connected; indeed, they are very nearly the same fact. I swear vengeance on the murderer of Rodolfo, not knowing (and not believing) that *I* am the murderer of Rodolfo. What is it I don't know—and, more importantly for our present purposes, don't believe? Is it 'the proposition that I am the murderer of Rodolfo'? What proposition is that? If a proposition is a set of possible worlds, then this proposition (if it exists) is one *you* could believe, too: any region of logical space I can believe myself (rightly or wrongly) to be located within is one *you* could, in principle, believe *yourself* to be located within. Suppose *I* came to believe this proposition on the sort of grounds on which *you* might come to believe it. (By reading a sentence expressing it in a newspaper, perhaps.) Then, it would seem, though I believe this proposition, I do not believe that I am the murderer of Rodolfo. Therefore, even if there is a proposition that I could correctly refer to as 'the proposition that I am the murderer of Rodolfo' (which is doubtful), I do not believe that I am the murderer of Rodolfo simply in virtue of believing that proposition. This argument, while it is cogent, is abstract almost to the point of impenetrability. Its intuitive point may be grasped more easily if we consider a similar argument that relies on two linguistic premises that the abstract argument does not rely on.

Suppose that if I uttered the words 'I am the murderer of Rodolfo' I should express a certain proposition (one that I do not, in fact, accept). Now suppose that the detectives investigating the murder of Rodolfo have nicknamed the unknown murderer 'Giacomo'. Then, if certain theories of proper names are correct, the sentence 'Giacomo is the murderer of Rodolfo' would express a certain contingent proposition, one true in just those worlds in which Rodolfo is murdered by (a counterpart of) the very person who *in fact* murdered Rodolfo. (This is one of the linguistic premises on which the abstract argument does not rely.) Suppose I were to hear the detectives discussing Rodolfo's murder and, as a result, came to say sincerely, 'Giacomo is the murderer of Rodolfo'. Then I should accept the proposition that Giacomo is the murderer of Rodolfo—or it seems reasonable to say so. (This is the second linguistic premiss.) But if propositions are sets of possible worlds,⁹ then the proposition that I am the murderer of Rodolfo *is* the proposition that Giacomo is the murderer of Rodolfo, since the detectives, unknown to them or me, conferred the name 'Giacomo' on *me*. And, therefore, I *do* accept the proposition that I am the murderer of Rodolfo; and yet I do not know, because I do not believe, that *I* am the murderer of Rodolfo. The general lesson is this: it is hopeless to try to account for our knowledge of or beliefs about our own location by means of our relations to

⁹ The reader may wish to protest at this point (and may have wished to protest at earlier points), that the thesis that the objects of belief are sets of worlds is known to lead to trouble, since, for example, to believe that Zorn's Lemma is equivalent to the Axiom of Choice is not to believe that there exist functions that are everywhere continuous but nowhere differentiable, despite the fact that these two mathematical theses hold in just the same—all—worlds. I quote Lewis: 'I know perfectly well that there is such a thing as ignorance of noncontingent matters. I do not know what is the proper treatment of such ignorance; several very different strategies have been proposed. They depart to different degrees, and in different directions, from the assignments of sets of worlds as propositional objects. My hunch is that this problem cuts across the issues I want to discuss, so I shall ignore it. If you wish, you may take it that I hope to cast some indirect light on our own attitudes by talking about the attitudes of imaginary hyper-rational creatures.' (135)

propositions—with the single exception of our location in logical space. And you and I and everyone we have ever heard of, or could ever hear of, or who could ever hear of us, have exactly the same location in logical space. But there are also our locations in ordinary space, or, more generally, in space-time, and in what one might call ‘causal’ space to be accounted for. (By ‘causal’ space I mean the network of causal relations that all of us inhabit.¹⁰ If I do not know that I am the murderer of Rodolfo, then I am partly ignorant of my location in causal space.) The locations in these spaces of any two people co-located in logical space differ. What, then, is the general form of our beliefs about where we are?

The answer is simple if we suppose that all belief is belief *de se*. To believe that one is in Chicago is to self-ascribe *being in Chicago*; to believe that today is Whitsunday, 1936, is to self-ascribe *existing only on Whitsunday, 1936*;¹¹ to believe that one is the murderer of Rodolfo is to self-ascribe *having murdered Rodolfo*. To self-ascribe a property is to believe oneself to be located in a certain region in some sort of space, and to believe oneself to be located is to self-ascribe.¹²

Thus, if we take the objects of belief to be propositions, we are unable to give a clear account of any of those beliefs that are typically expressed by first-person sentences. Or, at least, we should be unable to give such an account unless we postulated ‘first-person propositions’, unless we postulated that when I say, ‘I am writing a review of Lewis’s book’, it is not only true that I express a certain proposition, but also true that the proposition I express is distinct from—although, presumably, necessarily equivalent in truth-value to—the proposition *you* express when you say, ‘Van Inwagen is writing a review of Lewis’s book.’ If, however, we take the objects of attitudes to be properties, we need not postulate any ‘strange’ properties: the ordinary properties that we need for other purposes will do. (But perhaps you will say that *inhabiting a world in which ravens are black* is strange and extraordinary. Presumably you will say this only if you think that *inhabiting a country in which ravens are black* is an extraordinary property. And, presumably, you will think *that* only if you think that only a few open sentences express or correspond to properties. We need not dispute about words. We can always call what corresponds to ‘*x* inhabits a world in which ravens are black’ a *condition* rather than a property, and express our theory by saying that it is conditions that are the objects of attitudes. In any case, there is certainly the object that Lewis *calls* ‘the property of inhabiting a world in which all ravens are black’; it is the set of all possible objects that have no non-black ravens as world-mates.)

We thus gain an ontological advantage if we accept Lewis’s theory. We also

¹⁰ Lewis does not use the term ‘causal space’.

¹¹ This self-ascription is done by one’s current ‘time slice’; only time slices, and fairly short ones at that, can have beliefs about what day today is: time slices whose length is greater than a day cannot (normally) have beliefs about what day it is, just as I cannot (normally) have beliefs about what matchbox I am inside. (This statement would need to be elaborated to take account of the fact that I have many ‘current’ time slices shorter than a day.)

¹² And so, analogously, for other attitudes. To want to be in Chicago, for example, is to want to exemplify *being in Chicago*. Attitudes may be iterated. To want to believe that one owns a certain locomotive is to be in the position of the hero of Sara Bennett’s *Double Dactyl*: ‘Higgledy-Piggledy/Lewis (the Princeton one),/Seeing a steam-engine / Come down the line / Wishes to self-ascribe / Non-propositionally / *Lives in a world in which / That train is mine.*

gain an advantage in theoretical psychology, one that has grown more important in the last few years. This advantage is most easily described using the materials provided by Hilary Putnam's story of Earth and Twin Earth. On Earth (let us suppose), a woman named Elsie suddenly remembers that she has left some water boiling. Her *doppelgänger* on Twin Earth—whom we shall call 'Twelsie' though, of course, she calls herself 'Elsie'—simultaneously remembers something, something *she* would express by the words, 'I've left some water boiling' if she spoke her thought aloud. But it would seem that we cannot suppose that the thoughts of the two women are the same. For one thing, there is a plausible thesis we may call Putnam's Intuition: Elsie's thought is about water, and Twelsie's thought is about twin-water, a different stuff, a stuff having the chemical formula XYZ. Let us suppose that Putnam's Intuition is correct. Then (it seems plausible to say) the content of Elsie's thought is not the content of Twelsie's thought, for these two thoughts have different intentional properties: they are about, or are directed at, different objects. Moreover, even if Putnam's Intuition were wrong, it would seem that the thoughts of the two women would still have different intentional properties, since each woman's thought is about herself and about a certain local quantity of fluid (whatever its chemical structure may be) that she has put on the fire. Anyone who does wish to say that Elsie's and Twelsie's thoughts have the same content, therefore, faces two problems, which we may call the Natural Kinds Problem and the Indexical Problem.

Anyone who accepts Putnam's reasoning and agrees that the thoughts of Elsie and Twelsie differ in content faces the problem of spelling out the respects in which they do *not* differ. And this is an important problem, or so it would seem, because the respects in which the thoughts of the two women differ, however important these respects may be for philosophers of language, are irrelevant to the task of psychological explanation: it is evident that a causal explanation of anyone's behaviour that makes use of psychological states must simply *ignore* the differences between Elsie's thought and Twelsie's thought. Some philosophers have, accordingly, tried to characterize a 'narrow' or 'inner' sense of psychological state, according to which Elsie and Twelsie have the same inner states and differ only in their 'outer' states.¹³ But it seems to be difficult to make this distinction in any very precise way.

The Natural Kinds Problem, could, of course, be disposed of by denying Putnam's Intuition. But many philosophers find Putnam's Intuition extremely attractive, and, anyway, denying it would not help with the Indexical Problem. John Searle has shown how to preserve Putnam's Intuition and yet deny that the content of Elsie's and Twelsie's thoughts differ in those respects that are supposed to raise the Natural Kinds Problem.¹⁴ Searle's device may be combined with Lewis's theory of attitudes to remove the remaining apparent differences—the indexical ones—between the contents of Elsie's and Twelsie's thoughts. Searle's

¹³ See, *inter alia*, J. A. Fodor, 'Cognitive Science and the Twin Earth Problem', *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 23 (1982); Steven Stich, *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1983), chs. 8 and 9; Stephen White, 'Partial Character and the Language of Thought', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 63 (1982). I am indebted to Robert Van Gulick for these references.

¹⁴ See his *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 207–8. Searle does not himself find Putnam's Intuition particularly attractive.

device (or, rather, an adaptation of it) is this: Let A, B, and C be the surface or phenomenological properties that ordinary people use to identify water in ordinary circumstances (colourless, odourless, transparent, potable fluid that . . .). And let us suppose that 'stuffs' are individuated just as Putnam says they are: by their 'inner structure'. Why not, then, suppose that both Elsie's and Twelsie's thoughts have a content that each might express by uttering the following sentence, using the words it contains in exactly the same senses? 'I have left some (stuff having the properties ABC, which is the only stuff having those properties that occurs within *my* historical and cultural setting) boiling.' (We may note that if this supposition is correct, then Putnam's Intuition is also correct: Elsie's thought is about water—H₂O—and Twelsie's thought is about twin-water—XYZ.) This will dispose of the Natural Kinds Problem, but we are left with the Indexical Problem. We still cannot say that Elsie's and Twelsie's thoughts have the same propositional content, since these thoughts are about different women and different quantities of liquid. (In David Kaplan's terminology, their thoughts differ in *content*, despite the fact that they are identical in *character*.)¹⁵ But Lewis's theory of attitudes may now be applied to this intermediate result to enable us to say that the thoughts of the two women are absolutely *identical* in content: each self-ascribes the property expressed by the open sentence 'x has left some (stuff having the properties ABC, which is the only stuff having those properties that occurs within x's historical and cultural setting) boiling'. Thus Elsie and Twelsie are in exactly the same psychological state and there is no need to search for subtly different conceptions of 'same psychological state' that will serve the needs of the philosophy of language, on the one hand, and explanatory psychology on the other.¹⁶

III

Lewis's proposal to treat properties rather than propositions as the objects of so-called propositional attitudes is therefore an extremely attractive one. But must those of us (and that would be most of us) for whom Extreme Modal Realism is not a live option, regretfully reject this proposal? Lewis says not. In speaking of the separability of his theses on various topics from Extreme Modal Realism, he writes (in the Introduction to *Philosophical Papers*):

If I did not take properties as sets of possible individuals, . . . I could still defend the thesis of 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*' that properties are the appropriate objects of attitudes; but I could no longer support this thesis by drawing an analogy between self-location with respect to the entire population of logical space and self-location with respect to the population of the actual world. I hope the sceptical reader will consider breaking up the package and taking the parts that suit him. (ix-x)

This seems to me to be substantially correct. What would a theory of attribution look like that was constructed by 'subtracting' Extreme Modal Realism from Lewis's theory of attribution? A plausible answer to this question is available in the philosophical literature: such a theory would look very much like the theory

¹⁵ 'On the Logic of Demonstratives', in *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, ed. by Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

¹⁶ Well, not quite. We are still faced with the problem mentioned in note 9.

presented by Roderick M. Chisholm in his recent book *The First Person*.¹⁷ Like Lewis, Chisholm has hit upon the idea of treating properties as the sole objects of attitudes, and, in fact, of treating all belief as belief *de se*. (What Lewis calls 'belief *de se*', Chisholm calls 'direct attribution'; that is, where Lewis says 'self-ascribes the property *P*', Chisholm says 'directly attributes the property *P*'.) But Lewis and Chisholm have very different ideas about 'properties'. For Lewis, properties are, as we have seen, sets of possible objects. Chisholm, on the other hand, treats properties as *sui generis*, and in fact denies the existence of sets of any sort, eliminating talk of sets in favour of talk of properties by the device that Russell used to eliminate 'classes' in favour of 'propositional functions'. Chisholm describes what he calls properties as 'eternal' and 'abstract'. Lewis would say that Chisholm has not succeeded in attaching any clear sense to these words (a compliment Chisholm might well return, directed at Lewis's distinction between 'actual' and 'merely possible' concrete objects). Chisholm says that what he calls properties in no way involve, and exist independently of their exemplification by, individual, concrete objects. Lewis says that you and I are as essential to the being or constitution or nature (or whatever you want to call it) of every property we have as we are essential to the being of our unit sets. And yet, despite the deep ontological differences between Chisholm and Lewis about 'properties', it would be wrong to say that they were simply calling wholly different things by the same name. Rather, they are talking about the same objects and hold radically different views about them. We might compare their case with the case of the dualist and the materialist. The former says that 'persons' are immaterial objects, and the latter that they are material objects. And yet the dualist and the materialist are not simply calling different objects by the same name: they are talking about the same objects and hold radically different views about them. Most philosophers, I suppose, would accept some sort of functionalist account of how it is that the dualist and the materialist can be talking about the same thing: 'person' is a category whose membership is fixed by the specification of certain causal roles (persons are subject to the kind of causal modification we call perception and are the causes of intelligible speech and other voluntary action), and that sort of specification leaves a lot of room for differences of opinion about the ontology of persons. One might give a similar functionalist account of how it can be that Lewis and Chisholm are talking about the same things when they talk about properties: 'property' is a category whose membership is fixed by the specification of certain roles for its members to play (as it might be: whatever non-individuals it is that we quantify over when we say things like 'Spiders have many of the same features as insects'). It seems, therefore, that Lewis and Chisholm could be said to have substantially the same theory, despite their very deep differences about the ontology of properties, just as a dualist and a materialist might have political philosophies that were substantially the same.

Now Chisholm's discussion of *de dicto* belief is, naturally enough, not identical with Lewis's in every respect. Chisholm does not describe one's *de dicto* beliefs as beliefs about one's location in logical space, and does not say that my believing that virtue is rewarded is my self-ascribing the property *inhabiting a world in*

¹⁷ Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1981. See also Lewis's discussion (147–8) of a theory considered, but not adopted, by Quine in 'Propositional Objects'.

which virtue is rewarded. But he does say that my believing that virtue is rewarded consists in my self-ascribing (or 'directly attributing') the property *being such that virtue is rewarded*. And this is hardly different from Lewis's theory. As to self-location in logical space, though Chisholm does not in fact think of *de dicto* belief in those terms, is there any particular reason he shouldn't? 'Logical space', for Lewis, is the set of all possible worlds, and Chisholm (a Moderate Modal Realist) accepts the existence of possible worlds in a common Moderate Realist sense: as maximally consistent propositions or states of affairs. A Moderate Realist like Chisholm is perfectly free to think of worlds as forming a space and to think of each proposition as defining a region within this space; and he is therefore free to think of a *de dicto* belief as a belief about one's location in logical space.¹⁸ It might be objected that if Chisholm did talk of 'logical space', his use of the word 'space' would be at best a rather strained metaphor. But if this were so, why would this charge not be equally applicable to Lewis? It is certainly true that Lewis's 'logical space' is a set—it could even be a mereological sum if he chose—of objects that are, individually, spatio-temporally extended. (Or, at least, this is true if there are no non-spatio-temporal worlds.) But 'logical space' does not inherit its spatiality from its constituent worlds: if p_1 is a point in the space of one world and p_2 a point in the space of another, there is no space in which p_1 and p_2 are both points. This is not to say that 'logical space' cannot be thought of as a space in the mathematical sense. But if it is, each world must be thought of as a point in it, separated from other points by the sort of 'distance' that figures in a possible-worlds semantics for counterfactual conditionals. And to call the set of all things Chisholm calls 'worlds' a space in that sense is no metaphor: in that sense, the word 'space' may be applied to the set of all 'Chisholm worlds' and the set of all 'Lewis worlds' with equal propriety.

I conclude that (as Chisholm's example shows) the theory of attribution presented in 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*' and Extreme Modal Realism are entirely separable. I think that there are few papers in this volume of which it would not be said that their content is entirely separable from Extreme Modal Realism. It could not, of course, be said of 'Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic', and it could not be said of 'Anselm and Actuality', the argument of which requires the indexical theory of actuality. According to Lewis (ix), the argument of 'Tensions' requires Extreme Modal Realism, and this is probably correct. In general, however, the sceptical reader will find that Extreme Modal Realism is not an essential, or even a very important, part of the package.¹⁹

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Appendix: the papers

Ontology

1. 'Holes' [with Stephanie Lewis], 1970.
2. 'Anselm and Actuality', 1970. Five postscripts (2,000 words): 'Impossible Worlds'; 'The

¹⁸ Chisholm's theory of propositions allows distinct propositions to be necessarily equivalent in truth-value. Accordingly, Chisholm would have to think of a region in logical space as an equivalence class of propositions. He could not, therefore, describe *de dicto* belief about necessary truths as self-location in logical space; but then neither can Lewis.

¹⁹ I have benefited from advice from Jonathan Bennett, David Lewis, and Robert Van Gulick.

Ambiguity of Shiftiness'; 'Scepticism Revivified'; 'The Anthropic Principle'; 'Terminological Actualism'. The postscripts deal with various aspects of Extreme Modal Realism.

3. 'Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic', 1968. Seven postscripts (3,500 words): 'Being in a World'; 'Modal Continuants'; 'Vagueness and Variety of Counterpart Relations'; 'Pairs of Counterparts and Counterparts of Pairs'; 'Does Counterpart Theory Change Logic?' [this postscript contains an important reply to a charge made by Kripke ('Naming and Necessity', n. 13) and Alan Hazen, to the effect that Counterpart Theory is in conflict with the standard logic of quantification and identity]; 'Nonextensionality Tolerated'; 'Attitudinal Modalities Abandoned'; 'Conventionality of Postulate 2 Disowned' [a welcome clarification of Lewis's notorious comment on Postulate 2 of Counterpart Theory ('Nothing is in two worlds'): 'The counterpart relation is our substitute for identity between things in different worlds. Yet with this substitute in use, it would not matter if some things *were* identical with their counterparts after all! P2 serves only to rule out avoidable problems of individuation.']

4. 'Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies', 1971.

5. 'Survival and Identity', 1976. Two postscripts (2,000 words): 'Two Minds with but a Single Thought'; 'In Defense of Stages'.

6. 'How to Define Theoretical Terms', 1970.

Philosophy of Mind

7. 'An Argument for the Identity Theory', 1966.

8. 'Radical Interpretation', 1974. Two postscripts (1,500 words): 'Karl and Others of His Kind' ['I stated my problem in an unduly individualistic way: given the facts *about Karl* as a physical system, solve for the facts *about him* as a person—*his* beliefs, desires, and meanings. If Karl were a unique being, this would be the right question to ask. If not—if he is, for instance, human—it is not.']; 'The Systems of Attitudes'.

9. 'Mad Pain and Martian Pain', 1980. Postscript (750 words): 'Knowing What It's Like'.

10. 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*', 1979. Three postscripts (1,200 words): '*De Re* and *De Se*'; 'Grief for Moderate Modal Realism?'; '*Possibilia* Power?' ['... our beliefs and desires consist in relations to ... sets of possible individuals ... Then do our relations with unactualized *possibilia* enter into the causal histories of actual events? ... No ... Certain of our states ... cause our acts ... we classify them as certain beliefs and desires. We classify beliefs and desires by associating them with ... sets consisting in part of unactualized individuals ... You might as well worry that numbers have causal powers, since water boils because it reaches the centigrade temperature of 100.']

Philosophy of Language

11. 'Languages and Language', 1975.

12. 'General Semantics', 1970. Three postscripts (1,200 words): 'Index and Context'; 'Variables and Binding'; 'Infinitives Versus Clauses'.

13. 'Scorekeeping in a Language Game', 1979.

14. 'Tensions', 1974.

15. 'Truth in Fiction', 1978. Four postscripts (2,000 words): 'Make-believe Telling, Make-believe Learning'; 'Impossible Fictions'; 'Fiction in the Service of Truth'; 'The Puzzle of the Flash Stockman'.