

Introduction

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I. Strategic Context: The Nature of the Conceptual

This is a book about the use and content of *concepts*. Its animating thought is that the meanings of linguistic expressions and the contents of intentional states, indeed, awareness itself, should be understood, to begin with, in terms of playing a distinctive kind of role in *reasoning*. The idea of privileging *inference* over *reference* in the order of semantic explanation is introduced and motivated in the first chapter. Subsequent chapters develop that approach by using it to address a variety of philosophically important issues and problems: practical reasoning and the role of normative concepts in the theory of action, perception and the role of assessments of reliability in epistemology, the expressive role distinctive of singular terms and predicates (which, as subsentential expressions, cannot play the directly inferential role of premise or conclusion), propositional attitude ascriptions and the representational dimension of concept use, and the nature of conceptual objectivity. Although the discussion is intended to be intelligible in its own right—in each individual chapter, as well as collectively—it may nonetheless be helpful to step back a bit from the project pursued here and to situate it in the larger context of theoretical issues, possibilities, and approaches within which it takes shape.

The overall topic is the nature of the conceptual as such. This choice already entails certain significant emphases of attention: within the philosophy of mind, on awareness in the sense of *sapience* rather than of mere sentience; within semantics, on specifically *conceptual* content, to the detriment of concern with other sorts of contentfulness; within pragmatics, on singling out *discursive* (that is, concept-using) practice from the background of various other kinds of skillful doing. The aim is to focus on the conceptual in order to elaborate a relatively clear notion of the kind of *awareness* of something that consists in applying a concept to it—paradigmatically by saying or thinking something about it.

Addressing this topic requires making a series of choices of fundamental explanatory strategy. The resulting commitments need to be brought out into the open because they shape any approach to the conceptual in such important ways. Making this background of orienting commitments explicit serves to place a view in a philosophical space of alternatives. Features of an account that otherwise express nearly invisible (because only implicit) assumptions then show up as calling for decisions, which are subject to determinate sorts of challenges and demands for justification. The major axes articulating the region inhabited by the line of thought pursued here can be presented as a series of stark binary oppositions, which collectively make it possible to map the surrounding terrain.

1. *Assimilation* or *Differentiation* of the Conceptual?

One fork in the methodological road concerns the relative priority accorded to the *continuities* and *discontinuities* between discursive and nondiscursive creatures: the similarities and differences between the judgments and actions of concept users, on the one hand, and the uptake of environmental information and

instrumental interventions of non-concept-using organisms and artifacts, on the other. We can ask how sharp this distinction is—that is, to what extent and in what ways the possibility of intermediate cases can be made intelligible. And more or less independently of the answer to this question, it is possible for theorists to differ as to whether they *start* by describing a common genus and go on to elaborate differentiae (whether qualitative or in terms of some quantitative ordering by a particular kind of complexity), as opposed to beginning with an account of what is distinctive of the conceptual, which is only later placed in a larger frame encompassing the doings of less capable systems. Of course, wherever the story starts, it will need to account both for the ways in which concept use is like the comportments of non-discursive creatures and the ways in which it differs. Theories that *assimilate* conceptually structured activity to the nonconceptual activity out of which it arises (in evolutionary, historical, and individual-developmental terms) are in danger of failing to make enough of the difference. Theories that adopt the converse strategy, addressing themselves at the outset to what is *distinctive* of or exceptional about the conceptual, court the danger of not doing justice to generic similarities. The difference in emphasis and order of explanation can express substantive theoretical commitments.

Along this dimension, the story told here falls into the second class: *discontinuities* between the conceptual and non- or preconceptual are to the fore. The discussion is motivated by a concern with what is special about or characteristic of the conceptual as such. I am more interested in what separates concept users from non-concept users than in what unites them. This distinguishes my project from that of many in contemporary semantic theory (for instance, Dretske, Fodor, and Millikan), as well as from the classical American pragmatists, and perhaps from the later Wittgenstein as well.

2. Conceptual *Platonism* or *Pragmatism*?

Here is another strategic methodological issue. An account of the conceptual might explain the *use* of concepts in terms of a prior understanding of conceptual *content*. Or it might pursue a complementary explanatory strategy, beginning with a story about the practice or activity of applying concepts, and elaborating on that basis an understanding of conceptual content. The first can be called a *platonist* strategy, and the second a *pragmatist* (in this usage, a species of functionalist) strategy. One variety of semantic or conceptual platonism in this sense would identify the content typically expressed by declarative sentences and possessed by beliefs with sets of possible worlds, or with truth conditions otherwise specified. At some point it must then explain how associating such content with sentences and beliefs contributes to our understanding of how it is proper to use sentences in making claims, and to deploy beliefs in reasoning and guiding action. The pragmatist direction of explanation, by contrast, seeks to explain how the use of linguistic expressions, or the functional role of intentional states, confers conceptual content on them.

The view expounded in these pages is a kind of conceptual pragmatism (broadly, a form of functionalism) in this sense. It offers an account of knowing (or believing, or saying) *that* such and such is the case in terms of knowing *how* (being able) to *do* something. It approaches the contents of conceptually *explicit* propositions or principles from the direction of what is *implicit* in practices of using expressions and acquiring and deploying beliefs. ‘Assertion’, ‘claim’, ‘judgment’, and ‘belief’ are all systematically ambiguous expressions—and not merely by coincidence. The sort of pragmatism adopted here seeks to explain what is asserted by appeal to features of *assertings*, what is claimed in terms of *claimings*, what is judged by *judgings*, and what is believed by the role of *believings* (indeed, what is expressed by expressions of it)—in general, the content by the act, rather than the other way around.

3. Is *Mind* or *Language* the Fundamental Locus of Intentionality?

Concepts are applied in the realm of *language* by the public use of sentences and other linguistic expressions. They are applied in the realm of *mind* by the private adoption of and rational reliance on beliefs and other intentional states. The philosophical tradition from Descartes to Kant took for granted a *mentalist* order of explanation that privileged the mind as the native and original locus of concept use, relegating language to a secondary, late-coming, merely instrumental role in communicating to others thoughts already full-formed in a prior mental arena within the individual. The period since then has been characterized by a growing appreciation of the significance of language for thought and mindedness generally, and a questioning of the picture of language as a more or less convenient tool for expressing thoughts intelligible as contentful apart from any consideration of the possibility of *saying* what one is *thinking*. The twentieth century has been the century of language in philosophical thought, accelerating into something like a reversal of the traditional order of explanation. Thus Dummett defends a *linguistic* theory of intentionality: "We have opposed throughout the view of assertion as the expression of an interior act of judgment; judgment, rather, is the interiorization of the external act of assertion."¹ Dummett's claim is emblematic of views (put forward in different forms by thinkers such as Sellars and Geach) that see language use as antecedently and independently intelligible, and so as available to provide a model on the basis of which one could then come to understand mental acts and occurrences analogically: taking thinking as a kind of inner saying. Such a view just turns the classical early modern approach on its head.

Davidson claims that to be a believer one must be an interpreter of the speech of others, but that "neither language nor thinking can be fully explained in terms of the other, and neither has

conceptual priority. The two are, indeed, linked in the sense that each requires the other in order to be understood, but the linkage is not so complete that either suffices, even when reasonably reinforced, to explicate the other."² Although Davidson shares some important motivations with Dummett's purely linguistic theory, in fact these two views illustrate an important difference between two ways in which one might give prominence to linguistic practice in thinking about the use of concepts. Davidson's claim, by contrast to Dummett's, serves to epitomize a *relational* view of the significance of language for sapience: taking it that concept use is not intelligible in a context that does not include language use, but not insisting that linguistic practices can be made sense of without appeal at the same time to intentional states such as belief.

The line of thought pursued here is in this sense a *relational linguistic* approach to the conceptual. Concept use is treated as an essentially linguistic affair. Claiming and believing are two sides of one coin—not in the sense that every belief must be asserted nor that every assertion must express a belief, but in the sense that neither the activity of believing nor that of asserting can be made sense of independently of the other, and that their conceptual contents are essentially, and not just accidentally, capable of being the contents indifferently of both claims and beliefs. In the context of the commitment to the kind of explanatory relation between those activities and those contents mentioned above, this approach takes the form of a linguistic pragmatism that might take as its slogan Sellars's principle that *grasping a concept is mastering the use of a word*. James and Dewey were pragmatists in the sense I have picked out, since they try to understand conceptual content in terms of practices of using concepts. But, in line with their generally assimilationist approach to concept use, they were not specifically *linguistic* pragmatists. The later Wittgenstein, Quine, and Sellars (as well as Dummett and Davidson) are linguistic pragmatists, whose strategy of coming at the meaning of expressions by considering

their use provides a counterbalance to the Frege-Russell-Carnap-Tarski platonistic model-theoretic approach to meaning.

4. The Genus of Conceptual Activity: *Representation or Expression?*

Besides this issue about the original *locus* of the conceptual, there is an issue about how to understand the *genus* of which it is a species. (As I have indicated, this is no less urgent for theories that concern themselves in the first instance with what is distinctive of the conceptual species of that genus than it is for those adopting the assimilationist order of proceeding.) The master concept of Enlightenment epistemology and semantics, at least since Descartes, was *representation*. Awareness was understood in representational terms—whether taking the form of direct awareness of representings or of indirect awareness of representeds via representations of them. Typically, specifically conceptual representations were taken to be just one kind of representation of which and by means of which we can be aware. This orienting thought remains active to this day, surviving the quite substantial transformations required, for instance, for naturalistic and broadly functional accounts of awareness by and of representations. The result is a familiar, arguably dominant, contemporary research program: to put in place a general conception of representation, the simpler forms of which are exhibited already in the activity of non-concept-using creatures, and on that basis elaborate ever more complex forms until one reaches something recognizable as specifically *conceptual* representation.

This representational paradigm³ of what mindedness consists in is sufficiently ubiquitous that it is perhaps not easy to think of alternatives of similar generality and promise. One prominent countertradition, however, looks to the notion of *expression*, rather than representation, for the genus within which distinctively conceptual activity can become intelligible as a species.

To the Enlightenment picture of mind as *mirror*, Romanticism opposed an image of the mind as *lamp*.⁴ Broadly cognitive activity was to be seen not as a kind of passive reflection but as a kind of active revelation. Emphasizing the importance of experimental intervention and the creative character of theory production motivated an assimilation of scientific to artistic activity, of finding as constrained making—a picture of knowing nature as producing a second nature (to use Leonardo da Vinci's phrase).

The sort of expressivism Herder initiated takes as its initial point of departure the process by which inner becomes outer when a feeling is expressed by a gesture.⁵ We are then invited to consider more complex cases in which attitudes are expressed in actions, for instance, when a desire or intention issues in a corresponding doing, or a belief in saying. So long as we focus on the simplest cases, an expressivist model will not seem to offer a particularly promising avenue for construing the genus of which conceptual activity is a species (though one might say the same of the representational model if attention is focused on, say, the imprint of a seal on a wax tablet). But a suitable commentary on the model may be able to repair this impression somewhat.

First, we might think of the process of expression in the more complex and interesting cases as a matter not of transforming what is inner into what is outer but of making *explicit* what is *implicit*. This can be understood in a pragmatist sense of turning something we can initially only *do* into something we can *say*: codifying some sort of knowing *how* in the form of a knowing *that*. Second, as is suggested by this characterization of a pragmatist form of expressivism, in the cases of most interest in the present context, the notion of explicitness will be a *conceptual* one. The process of explicitation is to be the process of applying concepts: conceptualizing some subject matter. Third, we need not yield to the temptation, offered by the primitive expressive relation of gesture to feeling, to think of what is expressed and the expression of it as individually intelligible independently of consideration of the

relation between them. At least in the more interesting cases, specification of what is implicit may depend on the possibility of making it explicit. And the explicit may not be specifiable apart from consideration of what is made explicit. On such a view, what is expressed must be understood in terms of the possibility of expressing it. Such a *relational* expressivism will understand linguistic performances and the intentional states they express each as essential elements in a whole that is intelligible only in terms of their relation. According to such an approach, for instance, one ought not to think that one can understand either believing or asserting except by abstracting from their role in the process of asserting what one believes (that is, this sort of expressivism has as a consequence a relational linguistic view of the layout of the conceptual realm).

Understanding the genus of which the conceptual is a species in representational terms invites a platonist order of explanation. That it does not demand one is clear from the possibility of psychologically or linguistically functionalist accounts of representational content. Nonetheless, expressivism is particularly congenial to a pragmatist order of semantic explanation, as is indicated by the formulation of the relation between what is implicit and what is explicit in terms of the distinction between knowing how and knowing that. The account presented in the body of this work is one kind of constitutive, pragmatist, relationally linguistic, conceptual expressivism. The commitment to trying to make expressivism work as a framework within which to understand concept use and (so) conceptual content sets this project off from most others on the contemporary scene. For a representational paradigm reigns not only in the whole spectrum of analytically pursued semantics, from model-theoretic, through possible worlds, directly counterfactual, and informational approaches to teleo-semantic ones, but also in structuralism inheriting the broad outlines of Saussure's semantics, and even in those later continental thinkers whose poststructuralism is still so far mired in the

representational paradigm that it can see no other alternative to understanding meaning in terms of signifiers standing for signifieds than to understand it in terms of signifiers standing for other signifiers. Even contemporary forms of pragmatism, which are explicitly motivated by the rejection of platonist forms of the representational paradigm, have not embraced or sought to develop an expressivist alternative.

5. Distinguishing the Conceptual: *Intensionalism or Inferentialism?*

I am not in this introduction pretending to argue for any of the methodological commitments I am rehearsing. My aim is to offer a quick sketch of the terrain against the background of which the approach pursued in the body of this work (and at greater length and in greater detail in *Making It Explicit*) takes its characteristic shape—to introduce and place those commitments, rather than so much as to begin to entitle myself to any of them. I said at the outset that I am particularly interested in what *distinguishes* the conceptual from the nonconceptual. This is not a topic that has attracted as much philosophical attention in contemporary circles as I think it deserves. Insofar as there is a consensus answer abroad, I think it must be that the conceptual (or the intentional) is distinguished by a special sort of intensionality: intersubstitution of coreferential or coextensional expressions or concepts does not preserve the content of ascriptions of intentional states, paradigmatically propositional attitudes such as thought and belief. (This is a datum that is relatively independent of how that content is construed, whether in representational terms of truth conditions or of propositions as sets of possible worlds, or as functional roles of some sort, in information-theoretic terms, assertibility conditions, and so on.) Quite a different approach is pursued here.

The master idea that animates and orients this enterprise is that what distinguishes specifically *discursive* practices from the doings

of non-concept-using creatures is their *inferential* articulation. To talk about concepts is to talk about roles in reasoning. The original Romantic expressivists were (like the pragmatists, both classical and contemporary) *assimilationists* about the conceptual. My way of working out an expressivist approach is *exceptionalist*, focusing on the differentiae distinctive of the conceptual as such. It is a *rationalist* pragmatism, in giving pride of place to practices of giving and asking for reasons, understanding them as conferring conceptual content on performances, expressions, and states suitably caught up in those practices. In this way it differs from the view of other prominent theorists who are pragmatists in the sense of subscribing to use theorists of meaning such as Dewey, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Dummett, and Quine. And it is a rationalist expressivism in that it understands *expressing* something, making it *explicit*, as putting it in a form in which it can both serve as and stand in need of *reasons*: a form in which it can serve as both premise and conclusion in *inferences*. Saying or thinking *that* things are thus-and-so is undertaking a distinctive kind of *inferentially* articulated commitment: putting it forward as a fit premise for further inferences, that is, *authorizing* its use as such a premise, and undertaking *responsibility* to entitle oneself to that commitment, to vindicate one's authority, under suitable circumstances, paradigmatically by exhibiting it as the conclusion of an inference from other such commitments to which one is or can become entitled. Grasping the *concept* that is applied in such a making explicit is mastering its *inferential* use: knowing (in the practical sense of being able to distinguish, a kind of knowing *how*) what else one would be committing oneself to by applying the concept, what would entitle one to do so, and what would preclude such entitlement.

What might be thought of as Frege's fundamental *pragmatic* principle is that in *asserting* a claim, one is committing oneself to its *truth*. The standard way of exploiting this principle is a platonist one: some grip on the concept of *truth* derived from one's

semantic theory is assumed, and an account of the pragmatic force or speech act of assertion is elaborated based on this connection. But the principle can be exploited in more than one way, and linguistic pragmatism reverses the platonist order of explanation. Starting with an account of what one is *doing* in making a claim, it seeks to elaborate from it an account of what is *said*, the content or proposition—something that can be thought of in terms of truth conditions—to which one commits oneself by such a speech act.

What might be thought of as Frege's fundamental *semantic* principle is that a good inference never leads from a true claim(able) to one that is not true. It, too, can be exploited in either of two reductive orders of explanation.⁶ The standard way is to assume that one has a prior grip on the notion of truth, and use it to explain what good inference consists in. Rationalist or inferentialist pragmatism reverses this order of explanation also. It starts with a practical distinction between good and bad inferences, understood as a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate *doings*, and goes on to understand talk about truth as talk about what is preserved by the good moves.

6. Bottom-up or Top-down Semantic Explanation?

According to such an inferentialist line of thought, the fundamental form of the conceptual is the *propositional*, and the core of concept use is applying concepts in propositionally contentful *assertions*, *beliefs*, and *thoughts*. It claims that to be propositionally contentful is to be able to play the basic inferential roles of both premise and conclusion in inferences. Demarcating the conceptual realm by appeal to inference accordingly involves coming down firmly on one side of another abstract methodological divide. For it entails treating the sort of conceptual content that is expressed by whole declarative sentences as prior in the order of explanation to the sort of content that is expressed by subsenten-

tial expressions such as singular terms and predicates. Traditional term logics built up from below, offering first accounts of the meanings of the concepts associated with singular and general terms (in a nominalistic representational way: in terms of what they name or stand for), then of *judgments* constructed by relating those terms, and finally of proprieties of *inferences* relating those judgments. This order of explanation is still typical of contemporary representational approaches to semantics (paradigmatically Tarskian model-theoretic ones). There are, however, platonistic representational semantic theories that begin by assigning semantic interpretants (for instance, sets of possible worlds) to declarative sentences. Pragmatist semantic theories typically adopt a top-down approach because they start from the *use* of concepts, and what one does with concepts is apply them in judgment and action. Thus Kant takes the judgment to be the minimal unit of experience (and so of awareness in his discursive sense) because it is the first element in the traditional logical hierarchy that one can take *responsibility* for. (Naming is not a doing that makes one *answerable* to anything.) Frege starts with judgeable conceptual contents because that is what pragmatic *force* can attach to. And Wittgenstein's focus on use leads him to privilege sentences as bits of language the utterance of which can make a move in a language game. I take these to be three ways of making essentially the same pragmatist point about the priority of the propositional. Again, the connection between propositionalism and pragmatism in the broad sense of approaching meaning from the side of use is not a coercive one, since a functionalist version of this approach might privilege contents associated with subsentential expressions. Inferentialism, however, is an essentially propositional doctrine.

In this respect, inferentialism and expressivism dovetail neatly. For the paradigm of expression is *saying* something. And what can play the role of premise and conclusion of inference is a saying in the sense of a *claiming*. Expressivism, like inferentialism, directs our attention in the first place to *propositional* conceptual contents. A

further story must then be told about the *decomposition* of such contents into the sort of conceptual contents that are expressed (in a derivative sense) by subsentential expressions such as singular terms and predicates. (And about their subsequent *recomposition* to produce novel contents. Such a story is presented in Chapter 4.) Representationalism, by contrast, is motivated by a designational paradigm: the relation of a name to its bearer. In one standard way of pursuing this direction of explanation, one must then introduce a special ontological category of states of affairs, thought of as being represented by declarative sentences in something like the same way that objects are represented by singular terms.

Rationalist expressivism understands the explicit (the sayable in the sense of claimable, the form something must be in to count as having been expressed) in terms of its inferential role. Coupled with a linguistic pragmatism, such a view entails that practices of giving and asking for reasons have a privileged, indeed defining, role with respect to linguistic practice generally. What makes something a specifically *linguistic* (and therefore, according to this view, discursive) practice is that it accords some performances the force or significance of *claimings*, of *propositionally* contentful commitments, which can both serve as and stand in need of reasons. Practices that do not involve reasoning are not linguistic or (therefore) discursive practices. Thus the 'Slab' *Sprachspiel* that Wittgenstein introduces in the opening sections of the *Philosophical Investigations* should not, by these standards of demarcation, count as a genuine *Sprachspiel*. It is a *vocal* but not yet a *verbal* practice. By contrast to Wittgenstein, the inferential identification of the conceptual claims that language (discursive practice) has a *center*; it is not a motley. Inferential practices of producing and consuming *reasons* are *downtown* in the region of linguistic practice. Suburban linguistic practices utilize and depend on the conceptual contents forged in the game of giving and asking for reasons, are parasitic on it. Claiming, being able to justify one's

claims, and using one's claims to justify other claims and actions are not just one among other sets of things one can do with language. They are not on a par with other 'games' one can play. They are what in the first place make possible talking, and therefore thinking: sapience in general. Of course we do *many* other things as concept users besides applying concepts in judgment and action and justifying those applications. But (by contrast to the indiscriminately egalitarian picture presented by contemporary neo-Romantic theorists such as Derrida) according to this sort of semantic rationalism, those sophisticated, latecoming linguistic and more generally discursive activities are intelligible in principle only against the background of the core practices of inference-and-assertion.

7. Atomism or Holism?

Closely related to the issue of top-down or bottom-up semantic explanation is the issue of semantic *holism* versus semantic *atomism*. The tradition of formal semantics has been resolutely atomistic, in the sense that the assignment of a semantic interpretant to one element (say, a proper name) is taken to be intelligible independently of the assignment of semantic interpretants to any other elements (for instance, predicates or other proper names). One does not need to know anything about what other dots represent, or what blue wavy lines represent, in order to understand that a particular dot stands for Cleveland on a map. The task of formal semantics is the bottom-up one of explaining how semantically relevant whatsits can systematically be assigned to complex expressions, given that they have been assigned already to simple ones. Atomism adds that the assignments to the simple ones can be done one by one. By contrast, inferentialist semantics is resolutely *holist*. On an inferentialist account of conceptual content, one cannot have *any* concepts unless one has *many* concepts. For the content of each concept is articulated by its inferential

relations to *other* concepts. Concepts, then, must come in packages (though it does not yet follow that they must come in just one great big one). Conceptual holism is not a commitment that one might be motivated to undertake independently of the considerations that lead one to an inferential conception of the conceptual. It is rather a straightforward consequence of that approach.

8. Traditional or Rationalist Expressivism?

The heart of any expressivist theory is of course its account of expressing. What is expressed appears in two forms, as implicit (only potentially expressible) and explicit (actually expressed). To talk of expression is to talk about a process of transformation of what in virtue of its role in that process becomes visible as a *content* that appears in two *forms*, as implicit and then as explicit. As I indicated above, traditional Romantic expressivism took as its paradigm something like the relationship between an inner *feeling* expressed by an outer *gesture*. The *rationalist expressivism* informing the present account is quite different. Where, as here, explicitness is identified with specifically *conceptual* articulation, expressing something is *conceptualizing* it: putting it into conceptual form. I said at the outset that the goal of the enterprise is a clear account of sapient awareness, of the sense in which being aware of something is bringing it under a concept. On the approach pursued here, doing that is making a claim or judgment about what one is (thereby) aware of, forming a belief about it—in general, addressing it in a form that can serve as and stand in need of reasons, making it *inferentially* significant. The image of conceptualizing the unconceptualized is a familiar focus of philosophical attention, and it has given rise to a familiar panoply of philosophical pathologies. The rationalist expressivist course pursued here is distinguished by the particular strategy it employs for understanding the relation between the merely implicit and the conceptually explicit.

That strategy depends on a constellation of related inferentialist ideas. The first and most fundamental idea, already mentioned above, is a way of thinking about conceptual explicitness. To be explicit in the conceptual sense is to play a specifically *inferential* role. In the most basic case, it is to be *propositionally* contentful in the sense of being fit to serve both as a premise and as a conclusion in inferences. According to the relational linguistic view, to be thinkable or believable in this sense is to be *assertible*. The basic way of working out the pragmatist explanatory strategy is to understand *saying* (thinking, believing . . .) *that* such and such (that is, adopting a *propositionally contentful* attitude) in terms of a distinctive kind of knowing *how* or being able to *do* something. Inferentialism picks out the relevant sort of doing by its *inferential* articulation. Propositional (and more generally conceptual) contents become available to those engaging in linguistic practices, whose core is drawing conclusions and offering justifications. Merely reliably responding differentially to red things is not yet being *aware* of them *as* red. Discrimination by producing repeatable responses (as a machine or a pigeon might do) sorts the eliciting stimuli, and in that sense classifies them. But it is not yet *conceptual* classification, and so involves no awareness of the sort under investigation here. (If instead of teaching a pigeon to peck one button rather than another under appropriate sensory stimulation, we teach a parrot to utter one noise rather than another, we get only to the vocal, not yet to the verbal.) As a next stage, we might imagine a normative practice, according to which red things are *appropriately* responded to by making a certain noise. That would still not be a conceptual matter. What is *implicit* in that sort of practical doing becomes *explicit* in the application of the *concept red* when that responsive capacity or skill is put into a larger context that includes treating the responses as inferentially significant: as providing reasons for making other moves in the language game, and as themselves potentially standing in need of reasons that could be provided by making still other moves. The first advantage that this rationalist pragmatism claims over earlier

forms of expressivism is provided by this relatively clear inferential notion of conceptual explicitness.

Pragmatism about the conceptual seeks to understand what it is explicitly to *say* or *think that* something is the case in terms of what one must implicitly know *how* (be able) to *do*. That the relevant sort of doing is a constellation of asserting and inferring, making claims and giving and asking for reasons for them, is the essence of rationalist or inferentialist pragmatism about the conceptual. But once such an inferential notion of explicitness (propositional or, more generally, conceptual contentfulness) has been put in place, we can appeal to this notion of expressing (what is explicit) to understand various senses in which something can be expressed (what is implicit). The inferentialist picture actually puts in play several notions of implicitness. The first is what is made explicit by a claim or becomes explicit in it: a proposition, possible fact, what is said (sayable) or thought or believed. But in another sense we can talk about what still remains implicit in an explicit claim, namely, its inferential consequences. For in the context of a constellation of inferential practices, endorsing or committing oneself to one proposition (claimable) is implicitly endorsing or committing oneself to others which follow from it. Mastery of these inferential connections is the implicit background against which alone explicit claiming is intelligible. Actually drawing inferences from an explicit claimable (something that can be said, thought, and so on) is exploring the inferential relations that articulate its content. Since in *saying* that things are thus-and-so, for instance, that the cloth is red, one is not in the same sense *saying* (making explicit) that it is colored and spatially extended, those consequences count as only implicit. Since they articulate the content of the original saying, they are at least implicit in it. 'Implicit' is once again given a relatively clear inferential sense, but one that is distinct from the sense in which the fact that the cloth is red (to which one can reliably respond differentially) is made explicit in the claim. In different but related senses, an explicit claim has implicit in it:

1. proprieties governing inferential moves to and from the commitments to the claimable content in question;
2. the other claims that are inferential consequences of the first one, according to the practical proprieties mentioned in (1); and
3. the conceptual content of the claim, which is articulated by the inferences in (1).

These notions of implicitness are direct products of the basic inferential model of explicitness.

9. Is the Semantic Task of Logic Epistemological or Expressive?

One standard way to think of logic is as giving us special epistemic access to a kind of truth. Logic is for establishing the truth of certain kinds of claims, by *proving* them. But logic can also be thought of in expressive terms, as a distinctive set of tools for *saying* something that cannot otherwise be made explicit. Seeing how this can be so depends on making a further move: applying the original model of explicitness to the inferential consequences that are implicit (in the sense just considered) in any explicit claim. According to the inferentialist account of concept use, in making a claim one is implicitly endorsing a set of inferences, which articulate its conceptual content. Implicitly endorsing those inferences is a sort of doing. Understanding the conceptual content to which one has committed oneself is a kind of practical mastery: a bit of know-how that consists in being able to discriminate what does and does not follow from the claim, what would be evidence for and against it, and so on. Making explicit that know-how, the inferences one has implicitly endorsed, is putting it in the form of a claim *that* things are thus-and-so. In this case a central expressive resource for doing that is provided by basic *logical* vocabulary. In applying the concept *lion* to Leo, I implicitly commit myself to the applicability of the concept *mammal* to him. If my language is

expressively rich enough to contain *conditionals*, I can say that *if* Leo is a lion, *then* Leo is a mammal. (And if the language is expressively rich enough to include quantificational operators, I can say that *if anything* is a lion, then it is a mammal.) That Cleo is a cephalopod is good (indeed, decisive) evidence that she is not a lion. If my language is expressively rich enough to contain *negation*, I can make that implicit inferential component articulating the content of the concept *lion* explicit by saying that *if* Cleo is a cephalopod, then Cleo is *not* a mammal.

By saying things like this, by using *logical* vocabulary, I can make explicit the implicit inferential commitments that articulate the content of the concepts I apply in making ordinary explicit claims. Here the original inferential-propositional model of awareness (in the sense of sapience) is applied at a higher level. In the first application, we get an account of *consciousness*—for example, *that* Leo is a lion. In the second application we get an account of a kind of semantic *self-consciousness*. For in this way we begin to *say* what we are *doing* in *saying* that Leo is a lion. For instance, we make explicit (in the form of a claimable, and so propositional content) that we are committing ourselves thereby to his being a mammal by saying *that* if something is a lion, then it is a mammal. An account along these lines of the expressive role distinctive of logical vocabulary as such is introduced in Chapter 1 of this book. It is applied and extended in subsequent chapters to include such sophisticated locutions as normative vocabulary (in Chapter 2) and intentional tropes such as some uses of ‘of’ and ‘about’ (in Chapter 5), which are not usually put in a box with conditionals and negation. Inferentialism about conceptual content in this way makes possible a new kind of expressivism about logic. Applying the inferential model of explicitness, and so of expression, to the functioning of logical vocabulary provides a proving ground for the model that permits its elaboration at a level of clarity and exactness that has (to say the least) been unusual within the expressivist tradition. Two dimensions along

which philosophical payoffs can be expected from this fact are explored in Chapters 4 and 5, which present an expressive account of the nature and deduction of the necessity of the use of singular terms (and predicates), and an account of the expressive role characteristic of explicitly intentional and representational vocabulary, respectively.

Conditional claims—and claims formed by the use of logical vocabulary in general, of which the conditional is paradigmatic for the inferentialist—express a kind of semantic self-consciousness because they make explicit the inferential relations, consequences, and contents of ordinary nonlogical claims and concepts. It is possible to use the model of (partial) logical explicitation of nonlogical conceptual contents to illuminate certain features of ordinary making explicit in nonlogical claims. For instance, the conceptual content of a concept such as *red* has as a crucial element its *noninferential* circumstances of appropriate application (which, recall, are appealed to in the *broadly* inferential notion of content, since in applying the concept, one implicitly endorses the propriety of the inference from the concept's circumstances of appropriate application to its consequences of application, regardless of whether those circumstances are themselves specified in narrowly inferential terms). Part of the practical skill that forms the implicit background of knowing how against which alone a broadly inferentialist semantic theory can explain the practice of explicitly claiming that something is red, then, is the capacity noninferentially to respond appropriately and differentially to red things. Chapter 3 discusses how this part of the implicit background of explicit application of concepts of observables can itself be made explicit, in the logical sense, by first tracking it with a corresponding *reliability inference* and then codifying that inference with a conditional. In inferentialist terms, the reliability inference *conceptualizes* the initially nonconceptual capacity to respond differentially to red things. Once it appears in this inferential guise, the aspect of the content of the concept *red* that is still implicit (in

another sense) even when presented in the form of a reliability inference can be made explicit by using a conditional, just as for any other inferentially articulated aspect.

This development of the relation of expression between what is explicit and what is implicit is guided throughout by the fundamental idea of demarcating the conceptual by its specifically inferential articulation. At the first stage, that idea yields an understanding of the end result of making something explicit in a claimable (judgeable, thinkable, believable), that is, propositional content, of the sort expressed by the use of basic declarative sentences. At the second stage, the same inferentialist idea leads to an expressive model of the conceptual role distinctive of logical vocabulary, which serves to make explicit in the form of claimables (paradigmatically, conditional ones) the inferential relations that implicitly articulate the contents of the ordinary nonlogical concepts we use in making things explicit in the sense specified at the first stage. At the third stage, the notion of the expressive relation between what is explicit and what is implicit that was developed at the second stage in connection with the use of distinctively logical concepts is applied to illuminate further the relation between what is explicit in the sense of the first stage and what is made explicit thereby. The result is an account with a structure recognizable as Hegelian: a rationalist, expressivist account of (a kind of) consciousness (namely, sapient awareness) provides the basis for a corresponding account of (a kind of) self-consciousness (namely, semantic or conceptual self-consciousness), which is then called upon to deepen the original story by providing a model for understanding the sort of consciousness with which the account began.

II. Historical Context: Rationalism, Pragmatism, and Expressivism

At the very center of this account is its *rationalism*: the pride of place it gives to specifically *inferential* articulation, to playing a role in practices of giving and asking for *reasons*. It provides the