Contrastive Statements

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CONTRASTIVE STATEMENTS[1]

I HAVE three friends who are variously misinformed about one of my recent transactions. The first wants to know why I gave my typewriter to Clyde. I set him straight by telling him that I did not *give* my typewriter to Clyde:

(1) I *sold* my typewriter to Clyde.

Somewhat later my second friend gives it to be understood that he thinks I sold my typewriter to Alex. In correcting him I say,

(2) I sold my typewriter *to Clyde*.

Still later the third asks me why I sold my adding machine to Clyde and, once again, I find myself saying,

(3) I sold *my typewriter* to Clyde.

Obviously something different is going on in each of these cases. How shall we describe the difference? Are different propositions being expressed? Different statements being made? Can we say that there is a difference in the meaning of what is said? Or, perhaps, only a difference in what is meant in saying it? Is the difference merely a pragmatic one—a difference in the (semantically irrelevant) circumstances in which what is said is said?

The above three statements are examples of what I shall call contrastive statements. Contrastive statements constitute a special class, not in virtue of the fact that in making these statements we contrast one state of affairs with another. For, in a sense, all (contingent) statements do this, and in the same sense, the above three statements all have the same contrast: namely, my not selling my typewriter to Clyde. What distinguishes contrastive statements is that they embody a dominant contrast, a contrastive

[1] Special thanks to Dennis Stampe for his careful critique of an earlier version of this paper. I should also like to thank Lou Goble, Terry Penner, Peter Unger, Donald Susskind, and Jim Slinger for their helpful comments. I am further indebted to the philosophy departments of several universities for supplying the heat that allowed some of these ideas to get beyond their half-baked stage, and to the editors and referee of the *Philosophical Review* for their valuable suggestions.

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focus, a featured exclusion of certain possibilities. Something similar to a figure-ground distinction is at work in these statements. In (2) and (3) as well as in (1) there is the implication that I did not give my typewriter to Clyde; nonetheless, in (1) but not in (2) or (3) the contrast between *selling* and *giving* is featured. It stands out as the focal point of what is being said. Generally, but not invariably, the elements of dominant contrast are signaled by higher pitch or greater stress, but even without these acoustical clues the setting in which a statement is made will often suffice to determine which elements within it, if any, are contrastively dominant. The italics in (1) - (3) were not really necessary; the context in which these statements were introduced was enough to identify the contrastive focus of each.[2]

What I wish to show is that contrastive differences of the sort displayed by (1) - (3), however one may choose to classify these differences, are significantly involved in determining the meaning (hence, semantics) of a variety of larger expressions in which they can be embedded. If $C(U)$ is a linguistic expression in which U is embedded, and U can be given different contrastive foci (say U_1 and U_2), then it often makes a difference to the meaning of $C(U)$ whether we embed U_1 or U_2. Linguistically this is important because it means that any adequate semantical theory, one that is capable of exhibiting the source of semantical differences between complex expressions, between $C(U_1)$ and $C(U_2)$, will have to be provided with the resources for distinguishing between U_1 and U_2. And this means that any adequate semantical theory will have to distinguish between such expressions as (1), (2), and (3). Philosophically this is important because when philosophers are talking

[2] Hereafter when I speak of a contrastive difference between statements, or of two statements having a different contrastive focus, I should be understood as referring to those cases where the contrastive difference is not accompanied by a shift in the meaning of the element or elements involved. E.g., if I promise Miss M. to take her to the movies next Saturday night, I can keep my promise by, say, arranging to meet her at the theater, buying her ticket, etc. If, however, I tell Miss L., who happens to live in a very dangerous neighborhood and is known to be apprehensive about going out unescorted, that I will *take* her to the movies next Saturday night, I cannot keep my promise in the same way. In this context, with this emphasis, the word "take" acquires a different significance. When I speak about two utterances differing only in contrastive focus, I mean to be excluding such cases as this.

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about explanation, about evidence, about reasons (for doing and for believing), and about knowledge, they are concerned, at least in part, with trying to understand what it means to say that *S* knows that *U*, *S* has a reason to believe that *U*, *E* is evidence that *U*, and *E* is the explanation of the fact that *U*. Until one understands how the contrastive differences in *U* can make a difference in what it *means* to say these things, one cannot hope to provide a correct analysis of these key ideas.

I. Some Examples

Suppose Clyde gives me the tickets. In saying that he gave them to me by mistake we are saying something that has within it an element of ambiguity. If this was a mistake, wherein does the mistake lie? In giving *me* (rather than someone else) the tickets, or in giving *the tickets* (rather than something else) to me? Whether we treat

(4) Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake

as true or false will depend on where we locate the contrastive focus of "Clyde gave me the tickets." It will depend on whether we interpret (4) as

(4*a*) Clyde gave me <u>the tickets</u> by mistake

or as

(4*b*) Clyde gave <u>me</u> the tickets by mistake.[3]

If Clyde is instructed to give the tickets to Harry, but gives them to me by mistake, (4*a*) is false and (4*b*) is true. Since, therefore, there are circumstances in which they differ in truth value, (4*a*) and (4*b*) are not logically equivalent. They differ semantically.[4]

[3] In this example, and throughout the rest of the paper, I use underlining to indicate the contrastive focus of an expression. Higher pitch and greater stress will often rather naturally occur in connection with these underlined elements, but this phonetic difference is not what the underlining is meant to represent. However naturally it might occur, no additional stress or higher pitch is necessarily involved.

[4] I am taking logical equivalence as a *necessary* condition for sameness of meaning. It is not, of course, sufficient. To see that it is not sufficient one need

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Furthermore, this semantic difference surely has its source in the contrastive difference in the embedded expressions.[5]

One could, of course, try to locate the source of the difference between (4*a*) and (4*b*) elsewhere—in the operator "by mistake," for example. One might argue that this operator was ambiguous, having one meaning in (4*a*) and another meaning in (4*b*). The contrastive differences in the operand ("Clyde gave me the tickets") merely serve to disambiguate this expression. Such a suggestion must be rejected. Not only does it imply that a host of phrases (including all those that appear in the following examples) have more meanings than anyone ever suspected, but their degree of ambiguity will be indeterminate. Just *how* ambiguous they are will depend on what we embed. For instance, I can say not only that I gave him the tickets by mistake, but I can also say that I gave him the tickets this morning by mistake. Since "this morning" is now a candidate for the contrastive focus, we will be forced to conclude that "by mistake" is ambiguous at least to the third degree. And just what are these (at least) three meanings of "by mistake"?

The truth of the matter seems to be that although there is no change in the meaning of any of the elements of (4*a*) and (4*b*), (4*a*) and (4*b*) themselves differ in meaning. Moreover, this change in the meaning of the whole, rather than being traceable to a change in the meaning of any part, seems to be solely a function of the contrastive shift in the embedded expression. One might

only consider self-contradictory statements (or tautological statements). (*a*) "That horse is not a horse" and (*b*) "My father had no children" are logically equivalent (they cannot differ in truth value); yet it seems most implausible to say that they mean the same thing. Or consider Ziff's examples: (*c*) "Someone was a child" and (*d*) "Someone was a parent." Ziff cites such pairs to show that logical equivalence and synonymy should not be equated; see his "The Nonsynonymy of Active and Passive Sentences," *Philosophical Review*, LXXV (1966), 226-232. The first example is taken from James D. McCawley's "Where Do Noun Phrases Come From?" in *Readings in English Transformational Grammar*, ed. by Jacobs and Rosenbaum (Waltham, Mass., 1970), p. 183, n. 13.

[5] Notice that I here speak about the contrastive differences in the embedded expression or in the operand. The contrastive focus of the embedded expression need not be the focus of that larger (resultant) statement in which it is embedded. For a further discussion of this point see the end of Section II.

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say (and, no doubt, many will say) that the whole matter is simply a question of *scope*. The operator "by mistake" has a different scope in the two cases. (4*a*) and (4*b*) differ in meaning, not in virtue of any change in the meaning of the operator ("by mistake"), nor in virtue of any change in the meaning of the operand ("Clyde gave me the tickets"), but in virtue of the different way the first operates on the second. One can certainly say this, but the important point to notice is that this difference in the way the operator functions in the two cases is *determined by* the contrastive differences in the operand. I shall have more to say about this later, but for the moment we may simply note that the scope of the operator is regulated by, and restricted to, the contrastive focus of the embedded expression. Hence, the difference in meaning between (4*a*) and (4*b*) still has its *source* in the contrastive differences in question.

Let me structure my second example in the form of a dialogue—a convenient device for imposing a particular contrastive contour on the expression of interest.

Clyde: Alex, I need your advice. I have a 1927 Lincoln in my garage that is in mint condition. I haven't driven it for 35 years and it runs perfectly. Schultz, down the street, has expressed an interest in buying it and has offered me $30,000 for it.

Alex: So what is your problem?

Clyde: Well, I thought maybe if I held on to it longer it would become even more valuable.

Alex: That isn't very likely. Your car isn't going to appreciate in value much more no matter how long you keep it, and you may never again receive such a fine offer. I advise you to sell it to him.

Clyde takes Alex's advice and sells the car to Schultz. The check he receives from Schultz bounces and when he goes looking for Schultz he finds that he has left town. The car is gone and Clyde has nothing to show for it but a worthless check. The next time he meets Alex the conversation goes as follows:

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Clyde: You sure gave me a piece of rotten advice. Schultz took off with my car and left me with a bad check.

Alex: That is too bad, but why are you blaming me?

Clyde: *You* are the one who advised me to sell it to him.

Alex: Now wait a minute. You simply asked me for advice on whether or not you should sell the car for $30,000. You didn't ask me, nor did I advise you, about *whom* to sell the car to. I don't even know Schultz.

Clyde: If you didn't know Schultz, you shouldn't have given me the advice you did. When I asked you whether I should sell my car to Schultz or not, you said (I remember your exact words), "I advise you to sell it to him." So stop trying to avoid responsibility.

Alex is being dealt with unfairly. It seems clear that in this case what is true is that

(5*a*) Alex advised Clyde <u>to sell his car</u> to Schultz <u>for $30,000</u>

but it is not true that

(5*b*) Alex advised Clyde to sell his car <u>to Schultz</u> for $30,000.

Since this is so we can say that the statement

(5) Clyde sold his car to Schultz for $30,000

is such that whether or not we can say that Alex advised him to do what is expressed by this statement depends on what the contrastive focus happens to be. We can express this by saying that the scope of the "advice" operator is determined by the contrastive contour of the operand; the advice must be understood in reference to the contrastive focus (or foci) of the advice's content.

It may be thought that I have misrepresented this situation. Strictly speaking, all that Alex advised Clyde to do was to sell his car for $30,000. In a certain sense I am quite prepared to accept this way of putting the matter. Presumably Alex was ready to give the same advice whoever the (presumed) willing and dependable buyer happened to be. This fact, however, does not show that Alex did not advise Clyde to sell his car to Schultz for $30,000. What it does show is that certain elements that are explicitly

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contained in the verbal expression of the advice are, as it were, *idle elements*. They are not to be understood as part of the advice. There is nothing odd or incorrect in saying that Alex advised Clyde to sell his car to Schultz for $30,000. That is exactly what Alex did. By insisting that, strictly speaking, he did not advise him to sell it *to Schultz*, one is simply calling attention to the same fact with which I am trying to deal—the fact, namely, that until one knows the contrastive contour of (5) one cannot determine the truth of the claim that Alex advised him to do it. One really does not know in what Alex's advice consisted. Was the advice concerned with *whom* he should sell it to (on the understanding that he was going to sell it) or was it concerned with *whether* he should sell it (on the understanding that a buyer was available)? This kind of information, critical semantical information, when we are concerned with the statement "Alex advised Clyde to sell his car to Schultz for $30,000," is not to be found in the meaning of the embedded statement (or, in this case, sententially derived expression). It is, rather, to be found in its contrastive contour.

The second set of examples has to do with reasons, reasons one might have for doing something or for having done something. Later I shall look at other sorts of reasons.

Clyde, who finds intolerable any sustained involvement with a woman, and thus leads the life of a dedicated bachelor, learns that he stands to inherit a great deal of money at the age of thirty if he is married. He shops around and finds Bertha, an equally dedicated archaeologist who spends eleven months out of every year directing excavations in southeastern Turkey. Justifiably expecting that marriage to this woman will leave his life as little disturbed (in the relevant aspects) as any marriage could, he proposes. Bertha accepts and they are married. Now, is the reason Clyde had for *marrying* Bertha the same reason Clyde had for marrying *Bertha*? It would seem not. The reason he had for *marrying* Bertha was to qualify for the inheritance; the reason he had for marrying *Bertha* was that she was the woman least likely to disturb his style of living. Hence, although it is true that

(6*a*) The reason Clyde <u>married</u> Bertha was to qualify for the inheritance,

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it is not true that

(6*b*) The reason Clyde married Bertha was to qualify for the inheritance.

Reasons of the sort we are now considering provide a justification (of sorts) and sometimes an explanation, not for *everything* that is involved in the expression of what one has a reason for doing, but only for that which constitutes the contrastive focus of what one has a reason for doing.

Again it may be said that, strictly speaking, Clyde's reasons are reasons for quite different things. In (6*a*), for example, it would be better to express this as: "The reason Clyde got married (or married someone) was to qualify for the inheritance." (6*b*), on the other hand, should be expressed as: "The reason Clyde selected (chose) Bertha was to . . . ." Hence, although the reasons must be different in the two cases, what they are reasons for is also different. It is quite true that when we express the matter in this way we make a more explicit distinction between the two sorts of things for which Clyde has reasons, but the point to notice is that this *explicit* separation is optional. We can let the contrastive differences do the work for us. We can express ourselves, and often *do* express ourselves, in the manner of (6*a*). We do this because it is generally understood that one's reasons operate (so to speak) on the contrastive elements of that expression we use to express what we have reasons for; and when this focus is clear, as it often is, there is no ambiguity or misunderstanding. When "Bertha" does not constitute the focus (as in [6*a*]), we understand perfectly well that it has an "idle" role and may be replaced by "someone" without materially affecting what it is that we are saying we have reasons for. Just as clearly, when "Bertha" is the focus, we cannot replace "Bertha" by "someone" although we can replace "married" by some suitable alternative (for example, "selected" or "chose"). It should therefore be clear that the force of the "strictly speaking" mentioned above is to make *semantically explicit*, within the embedded statement, those distinctions that are otherwise being carried by its contrastive features. We can do this if we wish, but the fact remains that we frequently do not do it. If, then, one wants to understand the semantics of statements

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such as (6*a*) and (6*b*), one will have to understand how these contrastive differences can alter the meaning, the semantical character, of the larger statements in which they are embedded.

Clyde's business dealings provide us with another example. He has two employees, Alex and Herb, in his small business. Both are excellent workers. Business declines and Clyde can no longer afford to keep both of them. Which one shall he let go? Clyde finds the decision difficult but (still harboring a small grudge against Alex in connection with his advice about selling the Lincoln) he finally decides to retain Herb and give Alex notice. Here again we find that

(7*a*) Clyde's reason for firing Alex

is not

(7*b*) Clyde's reason for firing Alex.

His reason for *firing* Alex is that business is so bad that he cannot afford to keep two employees; his reason for firing *Alex*, on the other hand, has nothing to do with the state of the business. He fired *Alex* because he still resents the "bad" advice he received from him. If asked why he fired *Alex*, Clyde would no doubt say that Alex, in his judgment, lacked good business sense.

The third set of examples has to do with explanation or, if you prefer, the reason why something happened or the reason why someone did something. Needless to say, I think that these examples, and dozens more like them, constitute serious obstacles to any attempt to formulate a purely syntactical characterization of explanation or, indeed, any attempt that limits itself to the syntactical and (overt) semantical relationships that exist between the explanandum and the explanans.

Suppose Alex, after being fired, needs some money to meet expenses until he finds another job. Clyde lends him $300. It seems fairly obvious that there are three different questions (at least) that we can ask with the words, "Why did Clyde lend him $300?" and, accordingly, three different explanations one can give for Clyde's lending him $300. We may want to know why Clyde lent him $300. The answer might be that this is how much Alex thought he would need; or, perhaps, though Alex

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wanted more, this is all the ready cash that Clyde had available. On the other hand, we may want to know why Clyde lent him $300—why didn't he just *give* it to him (after all, Clyde owed him at least this much as separation pay)? Finally, we may be interested in finding out why Clyde lent him $300. Our explanation in this case might be that Clyde was the only friend Alex had who could afford to lend him that much and Clyde, knowing this, felt obliged.

In a context in which "Clyde" constitutes the contrastive focus of our explanandum, explanations are explanations of why *Clyde*, rather than someone else, did what Clyde did. When *what Clyde did* is the focus, explanations are explanations of why Clyde did *that* rather than something else. Hence, I can know why Clyde *went to the store* (to buy some beer) without knowing why *Clyde* went to the store (why didn't he send one of the children as he usually does when he is watching television?).

The following two statements are logically equivalent:

(8*a*) The men who are paid work.

(8*b*) The men who do not work are not paid.

Whether we wish to say that they are semantically equivalent is less clear. If we do not go this far, however, we can still observe how the contrastive differences between these two statements get "magnified" when embedded in the proper environment.

(9*a*) The men who are paid work because . . . (presumably because they are paid).

(9*b*) The men who do not work are not paid because . . . (presumably because they do not work).

Logical transformations, though they preserve truth value, frequently alter the contrastive focus of a statement. We then find ourselves explaining different things when we explain what is expressed by these logically equivalent expressions.

Generally speaking, logical transformations will alter the contrastive contour of a statement. For example, if we convert "All *A*s are *B*" into "All non-*B*s are non-*A*" we more or less naturally shift the contrast from "*B* rather than . . . " to "non-*A*

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rather than . . . . " (Although the focus falls, rather naturally, on the predicate or consequent in such cases, it need not.) It should come as no surprise then when we find that this makes a significant difference to the truth value of those statements in which these expressions are embedded. To take a well-known case, the explanation or reason why all ravens are black *is not* the explanation or reason why all non-black things are non-ravens. We can, for example, explain why all ravens are black by saying that they all possess the genetic constitution X, and X brings about or produces a black coloration. We cannot, however, use the same explanation to explain why non-black things are not ravens. We certainly cannot say that none of them are ravens because they possess the constitution X (the original explanation); neither can we say that the reason why none of them are ravens is that they all lack X (which they all do if, as we are assuming, X brings about or produces a black coloration). For although their lacking X (together, of course, with the fact that all ravens have X) implies that they are not ravens, it does not explain, causally or otherwise, *why* they are not ravens.[6] To suppose it does is tantamount to supposing that one can explain why there are no rabbits in one's carrot patch by saying that nothing in the carrot patch has a furry tail and long ears.

II. Pragmatics and Semantics

Without being explicit I have, in my discussion of the examples in the preceding section, suggested that a contrastive difference

[6] Of course it is not very clear what could be meant in asking for an explanation of why something is not a raven—e.g., why isn't this (pencil) a raven? For that matter it seems equally odd to ask why something is a raven. This kind of oddity seems to infect such questions when they are about a natural kind. This merely strengthens the point I am making in the text, but if someone is looking for an example in which it does (at least) make sense to give an explanation for what is expressed by the contrapositive of a general statement, the following might do. The reason why all the people who live in Foggyville are believers (viz., a dynamic preacher converted them all to the faith) need not be the reason why no nonbelievers live in Foggyville. The explanation for the latter state of affairs might be that they (the nonbelievers) all find the religious climate in Foggyville insufferable.

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between expressions is not itself a genuine semantical difference. Though $C(U)$ and $C(U')$ differ in meaning, and are therefore to be understood as differing semantically, and this difference is traceable to the contrastive difference between the embedded expressions, U and U', the grounds for calling this difference between U and U' a semantic difference (for saying that U and U' differ in meaning) is not at all clear. What, after all, is the difference in meaning between saying, "I sold my typewriter to Clyde" in answer to the question "To whom did you sell your typewriter?" and saying it in response to a question about what I sold to Clyde?

Consider an analogous situation where the difference in question happens to be syntactical rather than contrastive. Does the difference in word order between

(10) Both Tom and Dick are very ill

and

(11) Both Dick and Tom are very ill

show that they differ in meaning? Most people (I assume) would deny it. Yet, if we embed these expressions in the context "... but the latter is expected to recover soon" the results are quite different. Are we forced to say that (10) and (11) differ semantically because the difference in word order between them generates a difference in meaning between certain larger expressions in which they can be embedded? I think not. We do not have to make meteorology part of economics in order to admit that certain meteorological variables can, under appropriate circumstances, significantly affect the economy. Although few will venture to market in a tornado, wind velocity is not, for that reason alone, an economic variable. Or if it is, it is no less the proper object of study for meteorologists, not economists. Similarly, we can classify the difference between (10) and (11) as a syntactical difference while admitting that this syntactical difference can, in certain situations, figure importantly in the semantical analysis of an expression.

There are, of course, less trivial examples of this phenomenon. Compare:

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(12) I compelled the doctor to examine John

and

(13) I compelled John to be examined by the doctor.[7]

These obviously mean something different. There may be some dispute about how best to analyze this difference, but it seems plausible to say that the difference here is generated by the difference between the active and the passive version of the expression embedded in the context "I compelled . . . " and the way this alters what is understood as the object of the verb "compelled." Are we to say, then, that because (12) and (13) differ semantically, and the (ultimate?) source of this difference is the difference between

(14) The doctor examined John

and

(15) John was examined by the doctor

that (14) and (15) differ semantically? One may, of course, have good reasons for distinguishing between (14) and (15) on semantical grounds, but I do not think *this* argument is very persuasive —no more persuasive, at least, than the first argument for treating the word order of "Tom" and "Dick" as a semantic difference between (10) and (11). I think, therefore, that the difference in meaning between $C(U)$ and $C(U')$, when this difference is traceable to the contrastive difference between U and U', is not, by itself, a very strong argument in favor of saying that U and U' differ in meaning. We could as easily take it as an argument for the view that certain pragmatic differences (just as certain syntactical differences) are relevantly involved in the semantical analysis of certain expressions in which they can appear.

The contrastive differences with which we are now concerned have not escaped the attention of linguists and philosophers. Cook Wilson observed that

[7] The example is taken from Peter S. Rosenbaum, *The Grammar of English Predicate Complement Constructions* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 89.

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in the statement "glass is elastic," if the matter of inquiry was elasticity and the question was what substances possessed the property of elasticity, glass . . . would no longer be subject, and the kind of stress which fell upon "elastic" when glass was the subject, would now be transferred to "glass". . . . Thus the same form of words should be analyzed differently according as the words are the answer to one question or another.[8]

More recently, Wallace Chafe distinguishes between the new and the old information in a sentence and, as a special case of this, between contrastive and non-contrastive sentences.[9] "New" and "contrastive" are introduced as special semantic markers, and rules are formulated describing the relationships between these markers and other features of the sentence. Although much of what Chafe has to say about such sentences seems to me to be important, it is not clear why he calls "new" and "contrastive" *semantic* markers. Take, for instance, two of his own examples:

(16) <u>David</u> emptied the box.

(17) David <u>emptied</u> the box.

(Chafe uses underlining here to indicate the location of strongest stress and highest pitch.) These two sentences receive different semantic markings to indicate that different elements within them are contrastively dominant. But what justification is there for calling these sentences semantically different? Do they differ in meaning? If so, how? Chafe tells us (p. 224) that (16) implies a context in which there were several people who might have emptied the box; the speaker is saying that the member of this group who actually did was David. On the other hand, (17) implies that David might have done several different things with the box, but it says that what he actually did was to empty it. Does (16) really imply that there were several people who might have emptied the box? If so, in what sense of "imply"? Suppose

[8] This quotation is taken from Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 163. In connection with this point Chomsky remarks, "Whatever the force of such observations may be, it seems that they lie beyond the scope of any existing theory of language structure or language use" (p. 163).

[9] *Meaning and the Structure of Language* (Chicago, 1970), Ch. 15.

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there were *not* several people who might have emptied the box, but that the speaker believes that there were. Or suppose that the speaker knows that there were not, but thinks that his audience believes that there were. Would this show that what the speaker said when he uttered (16) was false, misleading, or inappropriate (because the implied context did not obtain)? It would seem not. The fact that David was the only one who had the opportunity to empty the box (who *might* have emptied the box) does not show that what the speaker means when he utters (16) is something different from what it would have been if there had been another person who might have emptied it.

To use "new" and "contrastive" as semantic markers as Chafe proposes has the unfortunate consequence that a statement such as "David emptied the box" can have as many different semantic readings (and presumably, therefore, as many different meanings) as there are listeners with different funds of information about the matter in question. For "emptied" might represent new information for me, "David" for you, and "the box" for a third. We could, of course, stipulate that the marker "new" is to be assigned to that element or set of elements within the sentence that *the speaker* regards as new. This, I take it, was Chafe's intention. We are still confronted, however, with the same question: why are the speaker's beliefs about what his audience knows (or believes) a semantical feature of what he says? Granted, these differences may generate differences in *how* he says what he says (for example, different stress), but why should we suppose that such beliefs on the part of the speaker change what it is that he is saying (or, if this is different, the meaning of what he says)?

What I propose to do, therefore, is to regard the contrastive features of an utterance as *pragmatic* features. I intend the word "pragmatic" to be taken in something like the sense in which it was used by Charles Morris and Rudolf Carnap—as concerned with the relationships that exist between the use of signs and the various states, both psychological and otherwise, of the speaker and audience.[10] In classifying contrastive differences as pragmatic

[10] Charles W. Morris, "Foundations of the Theory of Signs," and Rudolf Carnap, "Foundations of Logic and Mathematics," *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* (Chicago, 1955).

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rather than semantic I do not, of course, mean to be suggesting that they can be ignored in semantical analysis. This would be as erroneous as to conclude that the difference between the active and the passive voice, or the difference in word order between (10) and (11), could be ignored because the differences in question were syntactic. On the contrary, I have been arguing that contrastive differences play a very significant role in determining the meaning of certain expressions in which they are found, but I do not, for that reason alone, feel compelled to classify them as semantic differences. Nor do I feel compelled to classify differences in word order (of the sort exhibited by [10] and [11]) as semantical differences simply because alterations of this sort can affect the meaning of an expression.

I prefer this classification for the following reason. If U and U' differ only with respect to the location of their contrastive focus, then (as I have argued) it is difficult to see how one can sustain the charge that they differ in meaning. These utterances are composed of the same words, with the same meanings, in the same order, and they are about the same things (that is, there is no difference in what any term or expression in them is being used to refer to). If we use a possible difference in truth value as one of our marks for distinguishing the meaning of two statements, this criterion does not seem to help us much in driving a wedge between U and U' (but see footnote 12). S, assuming that we know that Clyde has robbed something, tells us that

(18) Clyde robbed the grocery store,

with the intention of telling us what store it was that Clyde robbed. If we suppose, contrary to fact, that the speaker had been assuming that we knew that the grocery store had been robbed and had uttered (18) with the intention of telling us *who* robbed it, this does not seem to alter the meaning of what he said: nor, indeed, does it seem to alter what he meant in saying it.[11] None-

[11] Though it might be held that it affects what the speaker *meant to tell us*; e.g., in the first case S meant to tell us what store it was that Clyde robbed, and in the second case he meant to be telling us who it was that robbed it. What the speaker meant to be telling us is not to be confused, however, with what he *meant* in saying what he did nor with the meaning of what he said. I am indebted to Dennis Stampe for clarification on this point.

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theless, the contrastive differences between U and U' emerge as relevant variables when we embed these expressions into certain larger contexts; the semantic differences between $C(U)$ and $C(U')$ are straightforwardly traceable to the contrastive differences in U and U'. The way I have chosen to describe this fact—the fact, namely, that the semantical differences between $C(U)$ and $C(U')$ are to be represented as having their source in the apparently non-semantical differences between U and U'—is by calling the difference between U and U' a pragmatic difference while acknowledging that certain pragmatic differences, just as certain syntactic differences, figure importantly in the semantic analysis of some expressions in which they are embedded.

I do not think that this classification, or the particular terminology associated with it, is itself of very great importance. As long as one understands the way contrastive differences can affect the meaning of those (larger) expressions in which they are embedded one has the heart of the matter. If someone insists that the contrastive differences we have been considering are genuine semantical differences that *directly* affect the meaning of those expressions in which they appear,[12] I am willing to accommodate. I would only point out that, as far as I know, very little attention has been given to this type of semantical variable or the way it functions when embedded. We certainly can no longer continue

[12] By arguing, for instance, that

(*a*) Clyde robbed <u>the bank</u>

and

(*b*) <u>Clyde</u> robbed the bank

could differ in truth value and, therefore, must differ in meaning. If Clyde robbed the grocery store then (the argument goes) (*b*) is neither true nor false since it presupposes that the bank has been robbed and the failure of this presupposition disqualifies (*b*) from being either true or false. (*a*), however, is false since in this case the speaker is asserting (rather than presupposing) that it was the bank that Clyde robbed. I think there is some merit in arguments of this sort, but one should notice that even if the above point is accepted, the logical equivalence of (*a*) and (*b*) is unaffected. It is still the case (or, at least, this argument does nothing to undermine the claim) that if either (*a*) or (*b*) is true, the other must also be true. Since it is not clear (to me at least) that this is the kind of "possible difference in truth value" that people have thought crucial in distinguishing between the meaning of two expressions, I shall continue (for reasons indicated in the text) to refer to such differences as pragmatic differences.

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on the premise that our semantical theory will concern itself with sentence types (where sentence types are identifiable independently of the speaker's intentions and surrounding context).[13]

Whenever an element or set of elements within an expression has a contrast, this element or set of elements is a candidate for the contrastive focus of the expression. The combinations can grow quite large. In the case of the last example, "Clyde robbed the grocery store," we can have not only "Clyde," "robbed," and "the grocery store" but also various combinations of these: for example, "robbed the grocery store." The fact that the focus may fall on any one of these elements gives the expression as a whole what we might call a pragmatic ambiguity. The ambiguity manifests itself as soon as we embed the expression into certain larger contexts—for example, Why did Clyde rob the grocery store? The number of different questions this sentence can be used to ask is an index to the degree of pragmatic ambiguity of "Clyde robbed the grocery store." Occasionally there seems to be no available contrast for certain elements. "It is raining," "I want to go to Istanbul," and "He stubbed his toe," because they are contrastively barren, are pragmatically deviant.[14]

Before leaving this discussion one further point should be made about the location of the contrastive focus. Earlier (footnote 5) I alluded to the possibility that an expression with a particular focus could be embedded in a larger context that had a different focus. We can embed "Clyde gave me the tickets" in the context ". . . by mistake"; this should *not* be taken to mean that the focus of the resultant statement, "Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake," is also "the tickets." Consider the following situation: Clyde gives me the tickets by mistake—he should have given me the passport. Suppose, further, that you think it was George to whom Clyde gave the tickets by mistake (you think that Clyde should have given the passport to George instead of the tickets). I correct you by saying, "Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake." In this case

[13] See Jerrold J. Katz and Jerry A. Fodor, "The Structure of Semantic Theory," reprinted in *The Structure of Language* (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), ed. by Katz and Fodor.

[14] The second example is taken from Ziff, *Semantic Analysis* (Ithaca, 1960), pp. 41-42.

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the focus is clearly on "me." There is nothing unusual about this. We have different foci, but they are the foci for different expressions. "The tickets" is the focus of the expression "Clyde gave me the tickets" and, hence, governs the scope of the operator "by mistake"; on the other hand, "me" is the focus of the larger statement, "Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake" and will therefore govern the scope of any further operator that has this larger expression as its operand. For example, there is a difference between explaining why Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake and explaining why Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake. What is relevant to determining the meaning of the resultant statement, "Clyde gave me the tickets by mistake," is not *its* contrastive focus, but the focus of that statement embedded in it. As illustrated in the above example, these foci may easily differ.

Much more needs to be said about what factors influence, and how they influence, the placement of the contrastive focus. I also think a good deal more should be said about the *general* way contrastive phenomena behave within a variety of contexts. Rather than try to do this, however, I would like to illustrate, specifically, how such considerations can be brought to bear on a number of important philosophical issues. I hope that the illustrations that follow will lend some credence to my earlier claim that contrastive phenomena figure, or should figure, prominently in a variety of epistemological analyses.

III. Some Epistemological Applications

To return to one of our earlier examples, let us assume that Clyde has a run of bad luck, that he is reduced to petty theft, and that he robs the grocery store. Tracy, suspecting that Clyde robbed the store, undertakes an investigation. Damaging evidence comes to light and Clyde is arrested. Suppose Tracy is asked to recite his evidence for thinking that Clyde robbed the grocery store. It is natural to think of Tracy being asked this within a setting in which the identity of the thief is in question. That is, Tracy is being asked what evidence he has for thinking that

(18*a*) Clyde robbed the grocery store.

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In response to such a query Tracy, naturally enough, cites such facts as that Clyde was seen loitering around the store at 3:00 A.M., Clyde's fingerprints were found on the cash register, and so on. What is important to notice is that none of these facts constitute evidence for supposing that

(18*b*) Clyde robbed the grocery store.

If we want evidence for (18*b*) the best I can think to offer is the fact that all the money was gone from the cash register when the owner returned in the morning. That, surely, is evidence that Clyde *robbed* the place; he did not just sleep overnight in the store with his arms around the cash register. Hence, whether we treat the fact that Clyde was seen near the store at three in the morning as evidence or not will depend on whether we regard the statement "Clyde robbed the grocery store" as having the contrastive focus of (18*a*) or (18*b*). This is only to say that Clyde's behavior at that early hour, and the fingerprints on the register, are relevant to the question of *who* robbed the store, not to *what Clyde did at the store*, whereas the information about the empty register is pertinent, not to who robbed the store, but to what Clyde did at the store.

A particularly simple illustration of this can be provided by comparing "John hit Jane" and "John hit Jane" (or "Jane was hit by John"). In the appropriate set of circumstances the fact that Jane has a black eye may be construed as grounds for thinking that John hit Jane (or that Jane was hit by John), but it need not, in the same set of circumstances, furnish any reason to suppose that John hit Jane.

Visual perception provides us with other examples. It is sometimes the case that one can see what someone is doing without being able to see who is doing it. (*a*) I can see that someone is chopping down the cherry tree, but I am too far away to see who it is. (*b*) Or I might be close enough to see that George is chopping something down, but be unable to see, either because I am not close enough or because something is blocking my line of sight, what it is that he is chopping down. (*c*) Or I might be able to see that George is doing something to the cherry tree but be unable to tell (visually) what he is doing to it. Take each of these three situations and add to it the additional feature that I know,

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by other than visual means, (*a*) who it is that is chopping down the cherry tree, (*b*) what it is that George is chopping down, and (*c*) what George is doing to the cherry tree. For instance, several people returning to the house where I am situated tell me (*a*) that it is George out there fooling with the cherry tree, or (*b*) that it is the cherry tree that George is chopping down, or (*c*) that what he is doing to the cherry tree is chopping it down. In each of these three different situations there is a *different* perceptual claim that can truly be made with the words, "I can see that George is chopping down the cherry tree." If the identity of the tree chopper is in question and the situation is as described in case (*a*), then although I know that George is the culprit, I could not truly say that I could see that George was chopping down the cherry tree (as I could in situations [*b*] and [*c*]). If interest shifted, however, to what George was doing, I could truly assert that I could see that he was chopping down the cherry tree. If the situation is as described in (*c*), on the other hand, and someone wanted to know how I knew that it was the cherry tree that George was chopping down, I could truly assert that I could see that George was chopping down the cherry tree. This despite the fact that in this situation I *cannot* see what George is doing to the cherry tree. To blur these distinctions by neglecting the way the contrastive focus affects the meaning of these perceptual claims is to completely misunderstand what we are claiming when we make claims of this sort. To schematize the above example, we must notice that in no one of the above three situations does the true assertion "*S* can see that *a* stands in the relation *R* to *b*" imply that S can see that it is *a* that stands in the relation *R* to *b*, that it is *R* by which *a* is related to *b*, and that it is *b* to which *a* is related by *R*. Which of these the perceptual claim entails will depend on what the contrastive focus of "*a* stands in the relation *R* to *b*" is, and this can shift as rapidly as people can ask questions.

The subjunctive conditional has recently occupied the attention of philosophers. It has also figured, either implicitly or explicitly, in some contemporary accounts of knowledge.[15] I think it may be

[15] I have in mind Brian Skyrms's article, "The Explication of 'X knows that P,' " *Journal of Philosophy*, LXIV, 386; my own account of knowledge in

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of some interest, therefore, to indicate briefly how the present discussion bears on our analysis of such conditionals. Consider the following exchange:

Player A (excitedly): If Clyde hadn't made that last shot we would have lost the game.

Player B (jealously): Oh, I don't agree. We would have won no matter which of us had made the last shot.

Player B, of course, is purposely distorting what Player A has said. Player A asserted that

(19*a*) If Clyde hadn't made the last shot, we would have lost.

Player B is denying that

(19*b*) If Clyde hadn't made the last shot, we would have lost.

There is no disagreement here. (19*a*) is true (or so we may assume) and (19*b*) is false. The semantic difference between these two conditionals resides in the pragmatic differences between their antecedent clauses.

To use one of our previous examples, consider the difference between saying

(20*a*) If Clyde hadn't *married* Bertha, he would not have been eligible for the inheritance.

and

(20*b*) If Clyde hadn't married *Bertha*, he would not have been eligible for the inheritance.

Circumstances can easily be imagined in which (20*a*) is true and

"Conclusive Reasons," *Australian Journal of Philosophy*, 49 (May, 1971); and Peter Unger's account of factual knowledge in terms of its not being at all accidental that a person is right in "An Analysis of Factual Knowledge," *Journal of Philosophy* (March 21, 1968). In the case of Unger's analysis I would argue that something's being not at all accidental involves such conditionals in the following way: if it is not at all accidental that *S* is right about *P*, then (it must be the case that) *S* would not have believed that *P* (or whatever it is in virtue of which we call him right) unless *P*.

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(20*b*) false. Moreover, this difference persists when we express these conditionals in the indicative.

(21*a*) If Clyde doesn't *marry* Bertha, he won't be eligible for the inheritance.

(21*b*) If Clyde doesn't marry *Bertha*, he won't be eligible for the inheritance.

The difference here is one of truth value. (21*a*) tells us that, given that, or on the understanding that, Bertha is Clyde's choice, he has to marry her to become eligible for the inheritance. This is true. (21*b*) tells us that, given that, or on the understanding that, he is going to marry someone, only Bertha will qualify him for the inheritance. This is false.

Notice, then, what this does to our notion of a sound argument (a valid argument with true premises). By using (19*a*) and the fact that they won the game as premises, one can soundly argue that Clyde must have made the last shot. That is, by using (19*a*) as the conditional premise one can soundly argue as follows:

(*A*1) If Clyde hadn't made the last shot, we would have lost
We did not lose

Therefore, Clyde made the last shot.

However, one cannot argue (soundly) that Clyde made the last shot since in order to reach this conclusion one must use (19*b*) as a premise and this, as we have just seen, is false.

(*A*2) If Clyde hadn't made the last shot, we would have lost
We did not lose

Therefore, Clyde made the last shot,

though it is perfectly valid, is not a sound argument since its first premise is false. Similar remarks can be made about the indicative conditional. If one knows that Clyde is eligible for the inheritance, one can conclude, via (21*a*), that he married Bertha. One cannot, however, conclude that he married Bertha since the derivation of this conclusion requires the use of the false premise (21*b*).

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Incidentally, it is interesting to see what happens if we try to conclude that Clyde made the last shot (the conclusion of [$A2$]) from the true premises contained in ($A1$). This argument:

($A3$) If Clyde hadn't made the last shot, we would have lost
We did not lose

Therefore, Clyde made the last shot

has true premises and is formally valid. Yet, I submit, one cannot use these premises to prove or support this conclusion (as one could with [$A1$]). Anyone willing to accept the first premise as true does so on the understanding that Clyde was the fellow taking the shot. To elevate an assumption or presupposition made in the premises to the conclusion of one's argument is, if you will, to commit a pragmatic fallacy. One could as well argue that Clyde is married (has a wife) from the fact that he sometimes stays out late and his wife worries when he does.

This should help to make clear one particular puzzling feature of claims embodying a contrastive focus. In concluding that Clyde made the last shot on the basis of considerations such as those in ($A1$) one would ordinarily be in a position, say, to correct anyone who mistakenly thought that Alex made the last shot. That is, one would also be prepared to maintain that Clyde made the last shot. Similarly, if I (witnessing Clyde enjoying his inheritance) conclude that he finally married Bertha, there is the presumption that I am similarly qualified to assert that he married Bertha when a situation arises in which this is the appropriate focus (for example, someone thinks he married Vera). Nothing I have so far said should be taken to suggest the denial of this. What must be emphasized, however, is that the grounds, support, backing (or what have you) for asserting the one need not be the same as that for asserting the other; and since they may be different, the one can be present while the other is absent. I may be in a position to assert both the conclusion of ($A1$) and the conclusion of ($A2$), but my epistemic qualifications for asserting the one are not (generally speaking) the same as my epistemic qualifications for asserting the other; I can reach the conclusion of ($A1$) from the true premises given as its premises, but I cannot reach the con-

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clusion of ($A2$) by *these* premises or the premises given in ($A2$). Quite different considerations will have to be invoked to warrant my assertion of the conclusion of ($A2$) and these "other considerations" may not be available to me. When we begin thinking, not simply of what a person says or believes, but of the justification that the person has for saying or thinking what he does, we tacitly embed what he says or thinks into a context ("*S* is justified in believing that . . .") in which the pragmatic features of the operand (what he says or thinks) become relevant. If you believe (or say) that Clyde married Bertha, you believe (or say) that Clyde married Bertha,[16] but if you are justified in believing (or in saying) that Clyde married Bertha, you may not be justified in believing (saying) that Clyde married Bertha. Whether one is justified in believing (saying) the latter is independent of the question of whether one is justified in believing (saying) the former.

We now have the resources to take a fresh look at the question of what we can, and do, know to be the case. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide much to look at. The previous discussion has indicated the direction in which this analysis is moving. A final example will have to suffice, for the moment at least, to suggest what lies ahead in this direction.

One can know that Clyde married Bertha without knowing that Clyde married Bertha (and vice versa). I have already argued that one's evidence, reasons, or justification for believing the one may be quite different from one's epistemic credentials for believing the other. Indeed, I have argued that one may have a justification for the one, yet not for the other. What remains to be seen is whether one can have a justification *sufficient unto knowledge* for the one, not for the other.[17] I think this can be shown by

[16] As far as I can tell the operators "*S* said that. . ." and "*S* believes that. . ." are not sensitive to the contrastive differences in the operand as is the case with the other operators we have been discussing. In this connection it should be remembered that there need be no phonetic difference between "Clyde married Bertha" and "Clyde married Bertha."

[17] For the purpose of this example I am assuming some version of the justified-true-belief account of knowledge. This is merely a convenience, and the point in no way depends on accepting this particular account of knowledge. Quite the contrary; I think that my claim could be made out more easily by

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imposing a Gettier-like twist to one's justification for the one, not for the other. Alex has strong evidence to support the claim that Clyde's betrothed is the local chairwoman of the Women's Liberation Movement; he also has strong evidence to support the claim that Bertha is the local chairwoman. This is his evidence to support the claim that Clyde married Bertha. His justification for thinking that Clyde married Bertha is that Clyde could not have collected the inheritance unless he married her and Alex knows that Clyde collected the inheritance. If, now, we suppose that Bertha is *not* the local chairwoman of the Women's Liberation Movement and that Clyde did *not* marry the local chairwoman (despite Alex's strong evidence in favor of both), we have a situation in which, although Alex does not know that Clyde married Bertha, he does know that he married Bertha. In the appropriate circumstances, of course, he would assert both; he believes both; he is reasonable in believing both; he doubtless *thinks* that he knows both. But, in point of fact, although he knows that Clyde married Bertha, he does not know whom Clyde married. The oddity associated with this last statement is bound up in the fact that we are dealing with these expressions out of context. There is nothing odd about refusing to consult Alex in our investigations concerning the identity of the woman Clyde married and, yet, after it has been established that the woman is Bertha, conceding to Alex (in the light of his reasons) the knowl-

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working with some of the alternative analyses that have appeared in the last eight years. It is, perhaps, no great surprise to find that my own analysis of conclusive reasons (*op. cit.*) enables one to make the distinction between knowing that Clyde married Bertha and knowing that Clyde married Bertha. But if one recalls what was said in Sec. I about explanation it should be apparent that an analysis of knowledge in terms of the best explanation, such as that suggested by Gilbert Harman in "Knowledge, Inference, and Explanation" (*American Philosophical Quarterly* [July, 1968]), will also permit a wedge to be driven between knowing that U and knowing that U' (where U and U' differ only with respect to the location of their contrastive focus). For example, Clyde's marrying Bertha may be the best (competing) explanation for Clyde's sudden wealth while his marrying Bertha is no explanation at all (let alone the best explanation) for the same fact. A similar point can be made about Unger's analysis (*op. cit.*). It may not be at all accidental that S is right about Clyde's marrying Bertha (S attended the wedding, watched them get married, etc.) although it may be somewhat accidental that he is right about Clyde's marrying Bertha (Bertha was wearing a heavy veil, etc.).

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edge that Clyde married Bertha. To argue, as some will doubtless argue, that Alex knows *only* that Clyde married *someone*, he does not know that it was Bertha that Clyde married, is to argue in vain; for this is quite consistent with saying that Alex knows that Clyde married Bertha.

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