

BACKGROUND: SCHEME/CONTENT DUALITY

According to this idea, we are always using a *conceptual scheme* to “categorize” or “carve up” the raw *content* that is reality. (102)

Every claim we make about truth is made from within our conceptual scheme. (103)

Other people or beings could use totally different conceptual schemes. (103)

BACKGROUND: TRANSLATION & RELATIVISM

If you can translate a statement from one scheme to another, then it must either be true in both or false in both. Otherwise you’d have a contradiction. (102)

If it’s *impossible* to translate certain statements between certain schemes, then it could be argued that the truth of the statements is merely relative to the scheme. (104)

“On The Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme” by Donald Davidson

a conceptual scheme corresponds to a set of intertranslatable languages (108)

Main Argument: the idea of a language that can’t be translated into our own is unintelligible, so the whole idea of conceptual schemes is unintelligible. (108, 117)

Davidson considers two proposals for how a scheme could relate to content (the content could be reality or our experiences):

1. A scheme *organizes* content (114)
 - i. You can’t organize just a single object - you can organize socks, but not a sock
 - ii. So being divided into multiple individual things must be an aspect of the raw uninterpreted content
 - iii. Any scheme for organizing such content would share some common concepts for individuation, which would allow for translation (115)
2. A scheme *fits or copes with* content (115)
 - i. This “adds nothing intelligible to the simple concept of being true” (116)
 - ii. Our best notion of truth relies on the ability to translate statements into our own language (116)
 - iii. So we can’t make sense of the idea of a scheme that is true but not translatable (117)

TARSKI'S CONVENTION T

Says that any adequate theory of truth for a language must entail theorems like the following for every sentence in the language (116):

“*la nieve es blanca*” is true if and only if snow is white.

That is, the theory of truth should imply that a statement in the language you’re talking *about* (Spanish in this example) is true if and only if its translation into the language you’re talking *in* is true.