

Semantic Norms and their Worldly Correspondents

Ryan Simonelli

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0 Introduction

One of the key elements of normative functionalism about linguistic meaning, as developed by Wilfrid Sellars (1953, 1954) and Robert Brandom (1994, 2000, 2008), is the claim that modal vocabulary is to be understood as expressive of semantic norms. Recently, this basic normativist account of the expressive function of modal vocabulary, as well as its important epistemological consequences, has been taken up and defended by Amie Thomasson (2020). However, Thomasson presents modal normativism as incompatible with a robust form of realism about the modal structure of independent reality, conceiving of modal facts as mere reifications or “hypostatizations” of semantic norms. Though Brandom (2015) claims that he does not want his normative expressivist account of modal vocabulary to have such anti-realist ontological consequences, he never provides a detailed account of the conditions that must be in place for the structure of semantic norms to correspond to the modal structure of objective reality. In this paper, I aim to fill this gap, considering two importantly different vocabularies and articulating the distinctive way in which their normative structure corresponds (or fails to correspond) to aspects of the modal structure of objective reality. First, drawing of work of John Haugeland (1998), I show how, at least in the case of specifically scientific practices, the normative structure of our discursive practices can be understood as genuinely corresponding to the modal structure of

reality, such that, by expressing these norms with the use of modal vocabulary, we really do articulate the modal structure of objective reality. Second, drawing on ideas from Sellars (1956, 1968), I consider the case of color vocabulary and show that a one-to-one correspondence between the structure semantic norms and the modal structure of objective reality may *fail* to obtain, such that the alethic modal relations causally responsible for the structure of those norms are distinct from those that one articulates in expressing those norms. Thus, while genuine knowledge of the structure of objective reality is indeed attainable, it does not come for free merely in virtue of some linguistic practice having the normative structure of fact-stating discourse.

1 Normative Expressivism and Modal Realism

Let us start by considering some modalized conditional sentences. For instance, let us consider the following:

1. If something is a sphere, then it must necessarily be round
2. If something is round, it can't possibly be a square.
3. If something's copper, then, necessarily, it melts at 1085° C
4. If something melts at a certain degree, it can't possibly freeze at a higher degree.

In uttering such sentences, one articulates alethic modal relations of *necessitation* or *preclusion* obtaining between two states of affairs. A state of affairs consisting in something's being spherical *necessitates* its being round, and something's being round *precludes* it from being a square. Exactly how to make sense of these modal relations, however, has proven puzzling to metaphysicians. One view that aims to clarify the nature of metaphysical modality is what Thomasson calls "modal normativism." On the modal normativist view, such articulations of alethic modal relations are to be understood as *expressions of semantic norms*. Articulating

these norms with the modal vocabulary developed by Brandom (1994), deploying the predicate “sphere” with respect to some thing in the context of some assertion *commits* one to deploying the predicate “round” with respect to that thing, and asserting of something it’s round *precludes one from being entitled* to assert of it that it’s a square. One acquires mastery of these norms through being brought into a linguistic practice from childhood, and articulations of metaphysical modal facts through uses of sentences such as (1)-(4) are to be understood as expressions of such semantic norms that one has come to master.

Why should one adopt this normativist view of modal vocabulary? As Thomasson articulates it, “The most important advantage of a normativist view is the epistemological advantage of avoiding the notoriously difficulties heavyweight realist views [. . .] face in explaining our knowledge of modal facts,” (17). Thus, rather than having to tell some story about how the modal structure of reality is grasped by speakers, for instance, through some strange sort of quasi-perceptual means, there is a straightforward story of knowledge of modal facts in terms of one’s mastery of linguistic norms. This is a motivation that Thomasson shares with earlier developers of modal normativism, Sellars and Brandom. Thomasson also takes it, however, that modal normativism has significant ontological consequences. Though she does not claim that there *are no* modal facts or modal relations, she claims that there are modal facts only in a deflationary sense, as reifications of semantic norms. For instance, insofar as there is a norm that asserting of something that it’s round precludes one from being entitled to assert of it that it’s a square, (2) is true, and insofar as we have a true sentence *p*, we can say “It’s a fact that *p*.” In this way, talk of “modal facts” is perfectly in order. However, on Thomasson’s picture, modal facts exist merely as reifications of semantic norms, and so it is not right to characterize objective reality, independent of our linguistic practices, as one in which various modal facts obtain. In this sense, Thomasson’s view can be characterized as “anti-realist.”

On this last point, Thomasson's development of normative expressivism differs markedly from Brandom's.¹ Though Brandom wants to retain the epistemological benefits of modal normativism articulated by Thomasson, understanding our knowledge of modal facts in terms of mastery of semantic norms, he does not go in for the sort of ontological anti-realism endorsed by Thomasson. On Brandom's view, to deny what Thomasson calls "heavyweight" realism would amount to rejecting the very idea of independent reality. This is so for two reasons. First, Brandom takes modal normativism to apply not just to *metaphysical* modalities, expressed with sentences like (1) and (2), but also *nomological* modalities, expressed with sentences like (3) and (4). Insofar as we adopt a modal normativist view about such sentences and maintain that the facts they state, consisting in althetic modal relations obtaining between properties, are *laws of nature*, we are committed to a more robust realism than Thomasson permits. Second, given Brandom's normative inferentialism, the content of a predicate like "sphere" or "copper" is to be articulated *entirely* in terms of the norms governing its use. Accordingly, worldly properties such as being a sphere and being copper are likewise to be articulated entirely in terms of the modal relations that obtain when such a property is instantiated. That is, something's being a sphere or being copper can be understood entirely in terms of what being this way necessitates it to be and precludes it from possibly being. Something's instantiating a property, then, can be understood as its having a particular "modal profile," where modal profiles are identified in terms of the set of normative relations that obtain whenever something instantiates that property. Insofar as one goes in for this sort of modal structuralist metaphysics, to deny that there are modal facts in the world, then, would be to deny that there even is so much as an objective world in which objects instantiate properties and stand in relations. Such a denial is clearly

¹Sellars's position on this point is more complicated, since Sellars ultimately endorses a hard-line nominalism according to which there are no relations at all.

unacceptable.

From an inferentialist perspective, then, there is reason to want to maintain the *epistemological* upshot of modal normativism, maintaining that speakers grasp modal relations through mastering the norms governing the use of linguistic expressions, while maintaining a robust sort of *modal realism*, according to which objective reality, independent of our linguistic practices, has a modal structure.² Moreover, insofar as skepticism is to be avoided, one would want to maintain that it is at least *possible* that one can come to grasp the structure of objective reality through mastery the norms of a linguistic practice that has come to structurally correspond to objective reality, knowing that this structural correspondence obtains. Accordingly, there is a genuine question of how the normative structure of our linguistic practices comes to correspond to the modal structure of independent reality, at least, in the cases in which they really do. This is the question I now want to address.

2 Scientific Vocabulary

Let me start with Brandom's characterization of what it is to take oneself, in thinking and speaking, to be representing properties that belong to the *objective world*, which is independent of one's subjective acts of thinking and speaking. According to Brandom, this is to take oneself to be *normatively* bound, in one's assertoric use of predicates and sentences, by the *alethic* entailment and incompatibility relations that obtain

²The term "modal realism" is often used in contemporary metaphysics to refer to Lewis's (1986) particular brand of modal realism according to which there really exist other possible worlds. I use it here, following Brandom (2015) to refer to the more general view according to which modal facts belong to objective reality property. Of course, if one thinks that modal facts are to be ultimately understood as facts about alternative possible worlds *and* one is a modal realist in this more general sense, then one is committed to Lewis's specific version of modal realism. However, if one opts for an alternative analysis of modality (for instance, treating modal relations of entailment and incompatibility as metaphysically primitive, as Brandom does) then one can be a modal realist without being a Lewisian modal realist.

between the properties, relations, and states of affairs one is representing. Brandom (2015) calls this regulative relation that obtains between these worldly entities, articulated in terms of alethic modal relations, and our linguistic activity, articulated in terms of normative relations, “semantic governance.” The worldly states of affairs, properties, and relations we represent, if we are to be counted as representing them, must *govern* or *reign over* our linguistic acts in the sense that the normative standards that we hold ourselves to in performing these acts must be taken to be inherited from the alethic structure of those states of affairs, properties, and relations themselves. But how, exactly, do we give the objective structure of reality itself this sort of regulative authority? How do we let objective reality reign in such a way that we can think of our norms as genuinely responsive to it, regulated by it? Brandom himself says relatively little to answer this question.³ For an account of the sort of “governance” that Brandom appeals to here and how it obtains particularly in the case of scientific practices, I’ll now turn to prior by John Haugeland (1998) in which he articulates this notion of “governance” in terms of what he calls “*beholdenness*” to objects.

To consider the notion of beholdenness to objects, as Haugeland spells it out, let us first note that the things in the world that we take to govern our vocabularies are not *bare* objects, but essentially things of certain *kinds*. Insofar as they are the things that they are, they are the kinds of things that they are, and that means that they necessarily do certain things and can’t possibly do certain other things. That is to say, they conform to certain *constitutive standards*. A piece of copper, for instance, essentially behaves in a certain way, melting at 1085° C, conducting electricity, falling to the earth when dropped in solid form, and so on. Something’s doing these things, behaving in all the ways that copper does, is constitutive of its being copper. This is in fact a consequence of the account of properties

³At least, he says little in his own voice. His Hegel (2019) may have some thoughts on the matter, but distilling them is not a task I will take on here.

we have offered, according to which properties are constituted by the metaphysical structure articulated with modalized conditionals such as “If something’s copper, then, necessarily, it melts at 1085° C.” Where the relevant properties are *kinds*, which specify *what* an object is (rather than *qualities*, which specify *how* an object is), the modalized conditionals that articulate the contents of the relevant kind terms articulate the standards that different things in the world conform to insofar as they are the things that they are. A given piece of copper, for instance, cannot be what it is and not do what copper does. In this sense, constitutive standards cannot possibly be violated. However, insofar as we conceive of things in the world as genuinely *independent* of our conceptualization of them, as being what they are independently of what we take them to be, we must nevertheless conceive of things as potentially violating the standards that would constitute their being what we take them to be, requiring us to reconceptualize them as differently constituted.⁴

In spelling this out, we may distinguish between two kinds of reconceptualization: what I’ll call “mundane reconceptualization” and “constitutive reconceptualization.”⁵ Mundane reconceptualization takes place at the level of the particular things. In such cases, we simply realize that some things are not what we took them to be. For instance, if we place a piece of copper in water and it dissolves, our reaction is not to think that a piece of copper has violated the standards constitutive of what it is to be copper, but, rather, that this thing isn’t actually copper or perhaps that the liquid we placed it in is not actually water. On Haugeland’s account, existential commitment—commitment to the existence of copper, orca whales, ribozymes, black holes, the Higgs field, or what have

⁴As Kukla and Lance (2014) have emphasized, largely in response to Haugeland, talk of objects “governing” or having “authority” over us is a metaphor that ultimately needs to be spelled out. Really, the only things doing the “holding,” as it were, are other discursive practitioners who hold one another to the standard of being responsive to the objects.

⁵This terminology is drawn from Haugeland’s (1998) distinction between “mundane capacities” and “constitutive capacities.”

you—is a sort of resiliency in the face of apparent violations of constitutive standards. In cases of apparent violations, rather than thinking that the constitutive standards have really been violated, we consider first whether we really have a sample of that kind, we double check our instruments, we see what could have gone wrong in the experiment, and so on. Insofar as we are existentially committed to things, we seriously consider the possibility of the violation of constitutive standards only as a last resort. However, holding onto this possibility as a genuine one is necessary in order to conceive of the things to which we are existentially committed as being what they are independently of we take them to be. This possibility's obtaining, however, is not a possibility defined within a pre-existing space of possibilities, for, if some class of objects to which we are existentially committed systematically violate their constitutive standards, this undermines their very status as being those objects, since, if the constitutive standards are violated, then *those* objects, the ones constituted by those constitutive standards, *aren't*.⁶ This sort of self-undermining brings forth a second sort of conceptual revision, constitutive reconceptualization, where we have revisions of our conception of the constitution of reality, revising our conception of its basic alethic structure.

Scientific theorizing is, in large part, the articulation of constitutive standards of observed objects or objects theoretically postulated to explain the behavior observed objects, and, in scientific practice, we are constantly giving these articulated objects chances to violate their constitutive standards. The fact that objects articulated by scientific theories *don't* violate their constitutive standards, when they or their effects are observed under a wide range of circumstances, is reason to think that objects constituted by those standards really exist in the world indepen-

⁶I am putting things slightly less paradoxically than Haugeland (1998), who speaks of this idea in terms of what he call "the excluded zone," which he describes as "a non-zero extension of the conceivable beyond the possible—that is *in fact* empty," (333).

dent of our linguistic practices.⁷ The most groundbreaking revolutions in scientific theorizing occur when objects appear to conform to certain constitutive standards articulated by a scientific theory under a very wide range of circumstances, but are then found to violate those standards in certain specific circumstances. For instance, in terms of repeated observations of objects conforming to the constitutive standards articulated by the theory, the Newtonian theory of material bodies and the gravitational forces they exert on one another was among the most successful scientific theories in history. It turns out, however, that, though Newton's theory makes very accurate predictions of the observable behavior of material bodies across a very wide range of circumstances, material bodies do not actually conform to the constitutive standards it articulates. This was revealed most strikingly in Mercury's failure to revolve around the Sun as a Newtonian body must. Upon this observation of the violation of constitutive standards, the scientific community, committed to the existence of Newtonian bodies, first made various attempts at mundane reconceptualization, aiming to maintain that the violation of constitutive standards apparently revealed by behavior of Mercury was merely apparent. For instance, another planet, dubbed "Vulcan," was postulated whose gravitation force would explain the irregularity in Mercury's orbit. None of these attempts at mundane reconceptualization proved successful, and constitutive reconceptualization eventually came in the form of Einstein's theory of gravity in terms of the curvature of spacetime which correctly predicated the orbit through a radically distinct conception of the phenomenon at hand. Material bodies, understood in the context of Einstein's theory of relativity as essentially such as to curve spacetime, are fundamentally different kinds of things—bound by different constitutive standards—than Newtonian bodies.

Of course, not all instances of constitutive reconceptualization are as

⁷This is an expression of the so-called "no miracles" argument for scientific realism (Putnam, 1975).

dramatic as the transition from Newtonian mechanics to Einsteinian mechanics, which radically transformed our conception of the basic structure of physical reality. Myriad more local instances of constitutive conceptualization and reconceptualization have taken place through the course of the history of natural scientific inquiry, yielding the resilient body of scientific understanding we have today. All of this, I take it, is an unpacking of the notion of “semantic governance,” of letting the meaning-constitutive norms of the practice be determined by the objects of theoretical inquiry themselves. This is what it is for our norms to be beholden to the objects. Being beholden to the objects requires responsiveness, in the construction of semantic norms, to what they do, revising the norms constitutive of our conception of what objects are if they do things that they constitutively cannot, given such a conception.

Because of this engine of conceptual revision that obtains in virtue of semantic governance by genuinely independent objects, a *counterfactual* relation obtains between linguistic practices that have this structure and the objects that govern those practices: *if the objects had been different, the norms governing practice would be different*. As Brandom (2015, 210-214) articulates it, this is, complementary to the *normative* relation of *semantic governance*, an *alethic modal* relation of *epistemic tracking*, which has the opposite directionality, going from the linguistic practice to the world. So, the linguistic practice is *semantically governed by* the objects, properties, and relations in the world, and the objects, properties, and relations in the world are *epistemically tracked by* the linguistic practice. If both of these relations obtain, then having a grip on the norms governing the use of linguistic expressions, and conceiving of this grip in worldly terms, just is to have a grip on the alethic structure of reality. In such a case, the modal vocabulary that articulates that structure, expressing the scorekeeping principles of a vocabulary that is governed by and tracks features of the world, can be understood as describing the structure of reality.

3 Observational (and Specifically Color) Vocabulary

The account of scientific vocabulary just articulated, I take it, gives us good reasons to think that the world, as it is in itself, is the world, as it is articulated by our mature scientific vocabulary, for scientific vocabulary, as I am conceiving it here, just is vocabulary that is shaped through a beholdenness to things, as they are in themselves.⁸ It is with this scientific orientation that I turn to my second topic: basic observational vocabulary, the sort of vocabulary whose deployment, it seems, must be *immediately* responsive to the world. This principally includes the vocabulary included so-called “proper and common sensibles” (cf. McDowell 2009), the basic concepts of *shape*, *texture*, *color*, and the like. These can be deployed not just *inferentially*, but also *perceptually*, upon the encountering of something that is such-and-such shape, such-and-such texture, such-and-such color, and so on. It might seem clear that, insofar as we are capable of perceiving independent reality, in this is the vocabulary we deploy in such perceptual episodes, the norms governing the correct use of this vocabulary must correspond to the modal structure of independent reality. As we’ll see, however, such a correspondence is not nearly as straightforward as one might think.

In order to understand the correspondence relations that obtain between the linguistic norms governing perceptual vocabulary and aspects of the objective world in which we deploy this vocabulary, it will be helpful to start the correspondence relations that obtain between the internal states of nondiscursive creatures and aspects of their environment to which they are reliably differentially responsive. For any creature that is able to skillfully navigate its environment—finding food, avoiding predators, and so on—there must be *some* correspondence relations that obtain between its internal states and elements of the world outside of it.

⁸In speaking of “mature scientific vocabulary,” I leave open the possibility that our current scientific vocabulary is still not completely mature, to be shaped by further constitutive reconceptualization.

That's just an essential element of how non-discursive representational systems work: there are internal states of the organism which correspond to external features of the organism's environment, such that, by being sensitive to its own internal states, the organism is able to navigate its environment. Following Sellars (1956, 1968) and, more recently, authors such as Rosenthal (1991, 2001, 2010) and Berger (2015, 2018, 2021), this sort of non-discursive sensory representation can be understood *holistically*, in terms of a structural isomorphism between the modal relations obtaining between the internal sensory states and the modal relations obtaining between the external properties between which the organism is capable of discriminating in virtue of entering into corresponding internal states. Thus, for instance, corresponding to various shapes there are internal sensory states, which, while not themselves circular-shaped, square-shaped, etc. stand to one another in modal relations of entailment and incompatibility that structurally correspond to the modal relations of entailment and incompatibility that actual shape properties stand to one another. So, for instance, one's being in the state of sensing circularly *entails* one's being in the state of sensing roundly, and one's being in such a state *excludes* one's being in a state of sensing squarely, and so on. Spelling out the details of how such sensory systems work is a task for cognitive neuroscience that we will not go into here. The important philosophical question for our purposes is how these sensory states, so understood, come to shape the structure of linguistic norms.

The key to understanding how sensory states relate to linguistic norms in discursive creatures like ourselves is to understand the crucial role that they play in the process of language learning, through which concepts are acquired. Sellars tells us that

“[T]he ability to teach a child the colour-shape language game seems to imply the existence of cues which systematically correspond [. . .] to the colour and shape attribute families, and are also causally connected with combinations of variously

coloured and shaped objects in various circumstances of perception," (1968, 19).

His idea here is that we are taught to apply color and shape words in response to external material objects which are conceptualized by the teacher as visibly instantiating certain colors and shapes. What the child is actually *responsive to*, in learning how to use this vocabulary, is their own internal sensory states, which are systematically caused by certain objects and which stand to one another in alethic modal relations of necessitation and exclusion which correspond to the normative relations of implication and incompatibility between the color and shape words. For instance, sensing redly (a state systematically caused by objects that reflect light at around 700nm) excludes sensing greenly, necessitates sensing coloredly, and so on, just as "That's red" precludes entitlement to "That's green," commits one to "That's colored," and so on. It is through the child's sensitivity to their own sensory states that it is possible for the teacher to bring the child's linguistic habits into conformity with the linguistic norms through linguistic training, it is through the child's eventually coming to hold themselves to the norms of the linguistic practice they've been brought into that they come to acquire the concepts of being red, green, colored, and so on, and it is through having acquired these concepts in this way that they eventually come to see things as visibly instantiating these properties. Following McDowell (1994), these perceptual experiences of things as having color properties can be understood as one in which the various color concepts are "actualized," though in a distinctively perceptual way, distinct from the way that concepts are actualized in judgment.⁹ The crucial Sellarsian addition to this story is that these actualizations of conceptual capacities in experience are prompted by the occurrence of the corresponding sensory states caused by the external objects.

⁹This same basic distinction is alternatively articulated by Pautz (2020) in terms of a distinction between "phenomenal predication" of properties and "cognitive predication."

Having briefly sketched this explanatory story, we are now in a position to ask about the precise relation between the norms governing the use of our perceptual vocabulary and the modal structure of objective reality. The first point to make is that, insofar as the norms governing perceptual vocabulary correspond to the alethic modal relations obtaining between our own sensory states, and these states are constituents of objective reality, this is *one* correspondence between the structure of the norms and a corresponding modal structure in objective reality. However, insofar as the properties we take ourselves to be ascribing to things of which we deploy this vocabulary are those of external things such as raspberries and stop signs, the question is whether there is a set of objective properties, external to our sensory states and perceptual judgments, to which our linguistic norms correspond. Here, I take it that the traditionally significant philosophical distinction between primary qualities and *secondary* qualities is indeed significant. For, while shape qualities can be relatively straightforwardly identified with properties of physical objects, color properties fail to find an identification that preserves essential features of these properties. The one plausible candidate for such an identification is to identify colors with reflectance properties of physical objects. However, there are multiple compelling arguments against such an identification. One such argument is Sellars's (1963) infamous "homogeneity argument," but a more recent and straightforward argument is Adam Pautz's (2006a, 2006b) "argument from structure." The basic point is that, if we try to identify colors with reflectance properties—for instance, identifying the color red with the property of reflecting light at 700nm—we see that they don't instantiate the structure that color properties essentially do. For instance, that it's essential to the property of being red that it is closer in hue to purple than it is to green, but the wavelengths of light reflected by purple things are around 400nm and those reflected by green things are around 550nm, so, by this identification, green should be closer to red than purple. I won't rehearse the details of this argument

here. The point I want to make is just that there are some compelling theoretical reasons to think that the external objects that appear to instantiate color properties in fact fail to instantiate them. Moreover, insofar as color properties are essentially instantiated by these objects if they're instantiated by anything at all, this gives us compelling reasons to think that color properties are uninstantiated *tout court*.¹⁰

Though I have not said enough here to really make the case that color properties are uninstantiated, I take it that, when faced with the task of integrating our concepts of color into a scientific worldview, such an account of color properties is indeed the most plausible account. The reason that such an account has not been seen as a viable theoretical option by many, I take it, is that it can seem to raise serious problems for the epistemology of color. On standard epistemological stories regarding our knowledge of perceptual properties, we know about them by perceiving objects that instantiate them. If colors are uninstantiated, then such a story cannot be given. Given that we clearly *do* have knowledge of color properties, this may seem to compel us to saying that something instantiates them (if not external objects, then perhaps our subjective experiences). However, if we have a normative functionalist semantics, paired with modal normativism and a modal structuralist account of properties, we can give a straightforward account of our grip on color properties, understood as uninstantiated properties that external objects *could* have instantiated, but in fact don't. Such properties are identified with the modal profiles that that we come to grasp through mastering the norms governing the use of predicates like "red," "colored," "green," and so on. The structure of these norms, at least insofar as it is solely the normative relations between color predicates that is at issue, *does* correspond to the alethic modal profiles of our internal states. These

¹⁰Thus, it would be a mistake (a category mistake, I take it) to, in response to this argument, come to the conclusion that must really be sensory experiences that are themselves colored red or green. If *anything* is red or green, it must be such things as raspberries and limes.

states, however, though they stand in structural relations to one another that correspond to those of our color concepts, are not themselves actually colored. On the view of objective reality that I have stated, nothing is.

I have paid special attention to the case of color vocabulary to illustrate a case in which there is a failure of correspondence between the norms governing the use of the vocabulary and the set modal relations obtaining in objective reality. The case shows, I believe, that it is possible for there to be a fact-stating vocabulary, the norms of which are systematically constrained by modal relations obtaining between bits of objective reality, but, in using modal vocabulary to expressing the norms governing the use of this vocabulary, one fails to articulate *these* modal relations. In expressing the norms governing the use of color vocabulary, one articulates the modal profiles constitutive of color properties. Nothing in objective reality, however, has these specific modal profiles. The modal profiles that are instantiated in the world are those of reflective properties, frequencies of light waves, sensory states, and so on—none of which can be identified with colors. Thus, though we are responsive to various bits of the objective world in using color vocabulary, there is not a single one-to-one correspondence between the properties that we are ascribing to things in using color vocabulary and any one set of properties actually possessed by things in the objective world. The possibility of such a “mismatch” may seem to open the door for skepticism. However, far from it, this possibility of failure is in fact *required* to secure an understanding of genuine success. The crucial point that this example is meant to show is that we do not get knowledge of the objective modal structure of world for free just by speaking a language in which declarative sentences are used. Knowledge of the world, as it is in itself, is not that easy. If it was, it wouldn't be knowledge of the world, as it is in itself.

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