

## CHAPTER 14

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# PHILOSOPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

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PHILOSOPHERS spend a lot of time attempting to give analyses of philosophically interesting notions. Analyses have been proposed for knowledge, moral rightness, species-hood, object-hood, persistence, change, reference, and much more. It is therefore surprising that there isn't more consensus among philosophers regarding what they are attempting to do in providing purported analyses. Philosophers don't agree about the things that are being analyzed, nor what it is to analyze something. In what follows, we'll see a sampling of views on what philosophical analysis is. The present work isn't meant to be exhaustive and there is much work that will not be discussed. However, it does purport to illustrate the main lines of thinking about analysis in recent philosophy. The present work also makes no attempt to discuss the views about analysis of historical figures like Gottlob Frege, G. E. Moore, and Bertrand Russell. There is a rich literature on this topic and interested readers should consult it. Here, we focus on more contemporary views.

### 2. VIEWS OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS THAT ADDRESS THE PARADOX OF ANALYSIS

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In this section we discuss views of philosophical analysis that aim to address the so-called *paradox of analysis*. Though the paradox is often said to have been formulated by Plato, contemporary interest in it is due to the formulations of the paradox by C. H. Langford and G. E. Moore. Hence, we do well to start here. What follows is Moore's influential statement of the paradox:

But, now, if we say, as I propose to, that to make any of the above three statements<sup>1</sup> is to give an analysis of the concept 'brother', we are obviously faced with a puzzle which Mr. Langford calls 'the paradox of analysis'. Suppose we use still another way, a fourth way, of expressing the very same statement which is expressed in those three ways I gave, and say: 'To be a brother is the same thing as to be a male sibling.' The paradox arises from the fact that, *if* this statement is true, then it seems that you would be making exactly the same statement if you said: 'To be a brother is the same thing as to be a brother.' But it is obvious that these two statements are *not* the same; and obvious also that nobody would say that by asserting 'To be a brother is to be a brother.' you were giving an analysis of the concept 'brother'.<sup>2</sup>

Moore claims that if the following is a correct analysis:

1. To be a brother is to be a male sibling

then if you say either of the two following sentences, you would be making the same statement and, in both cases, giving an analysis of the concept 'brother':

- 2a. To be a brother is to be a brother
- 2b. To be a brother is to be a male sibling

But, Moore says, both of these things are obviously false: saying 2a and 2b does not amount to making the same statement; and saying 2a does not amount to giving an analysis.

In effect, Moore is claiming that if 1 expresses an analysis, then the sentences 2a and 2b stand in some relation (saying 2a is making the same statement as saying 2b; in saying 2a or 2b, one is giving an analysis). But there is strong reason to think 2a and 2b do not stand in this relation. Hence, in its most general form, the paradox can be viewed as follows. We begin by supposing we have a correct analysis:

1. To be a brother is to be a male sibling

Next, it is alleged that if 1 is a correct analysis, then the following sentences stand in some relation:

- 2a. To be a brother is to be a brother
- 2b. To be a brother is to be a male sibling

What relation they are claimed to stand in varies with the version of the paradox: it may be claimed that they express the same proposition; that they mean the same thing; that they are both analyses and so on. Reasons are then given for the claim that they cannot stand in this relation. Thus the paradox: assuming that 1 is an analysis, 2a and 2b both must and must not stand in some relation.

Of course, any view of philosophical or conceptual analysis that addresses the paradox of analysis must somehow resolve it. But presumably theories addressing the paradox should

<sup>1</sup> The statements in question are: "The concept "being a brother" is identical to the concept "being a male sibling"; "The propositional function "x is a brother" is identical to the propositional function "x is a male sibling"; and "To say that a person is a brother is the same thing as to say that that person is a male sibling." See Schilpp 1942 p. 665.

<sup>2</sup> Schilpp 1942 p. 665.

do more than this. For example, the analysis given in 1 is importantly different from both of the following two claims, which appear to be (purported) analyses in some sense as well:

(JTB) To be in instance of knowledge is to be an instance of justified true belief( $H_2O$ )  
To be water is to be  $H_2O$

In particular, 1 is uninteresting and trivial in a way that JTB and  $H_2O$  are not. Further, JTB and 1 can be the result of armchair theorizing. Not so for  $H_2O$ . An account of analysis that addresses the paradox of analysis should explain these things. Let's now turn to such accounts.

We begin with the view of Sosa 1983. Sosa is very much concerned with the paradox of analysis, and states it as follows:

(A) To be a cube is (=) to be a closed solid with sides all square.

(C1) No one can think consciously of being a cube without thinking consciously of being a closed solid with all sides square.

(C1) follows from A given:

RCT: Thinking (in various modes) is a relation between a thinker and a Thought (in an extension of Frege's sense which covers not only propositions but also properties, such as being a cube).<sup>3</sup>

Sosa supposes A to follow from the fact that the analysis of what it is to be a cube is that it is to be a closed solid with all sides square. RCT looks quite plausible. But C1 looks false. According to Sosa 1983, it is complex properties, built up out of other properties and relations, that are the objects of analysis.<sup>4</sup> An analysis specifies the constituents of the property being analyzed and how they are combined to yield the property being analyzed. Sosa refers to the latter as a 'logical mode of constitution', and explicitly mentions negation and conjunction.<sup>5</sup> Sosa also considers identity to be a limiting case of a mode of constitution, so that every property is constituted out of itself by the mode of constitution of identity. Hence, in general, an analysis is expressed by a sentence of the form 'P is constituted by mode of constitution M out of constituents  $C_1, \dots, C_n$  in that order.' An example Sosa uses is this: the property of being a cube is constituted by the mode of constitution *conjunction* out of constituents *being a closed solid* and *having all sides square*.

But how does all this solve the paradox of analysis that Sosa originally stated? Well, it doesn't really. Sosa thinks the property of being a cube and the property of being a closed solid with all sides square just are the same property. And given his commitments, this seems right: after

<sup>3</sup> Sosa 1983 pp. 695–696. Sosa also formulates a version of the paradox that begins with an identity claim about propositions instead of the identity claim about properties (A) above. I'll stick to A and C1 since Sosa spends more time on this version. Thinking back to my general schema for the paradox of analysis, we can say that on Sosa's version, assuming that *being a closed solid with all sides square* provides an analysis of the property of *being a cube*, then the property identity A is true (the properties must stand in some relation—identity; of course on my version above, it was *propositions* or *sentences* that must stand in some relation assuming some analysis is correct). But then that the apparently false C1 follows from A (given RCT) gives us reason to think that the properties in question are not identical contra A.

<sup>4</sup> Actually, what are analyzed on Sosa's view are Thoughts, which include properties and propositions. But as I indicated I'll concentrate on properties here.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 705.

all, if the property of being a cube is composed by conjunction out of the properties of being a closed solid and having all sides square, it is hard to see how the property of being a cube could fail to be the same property as the property of being a closed solid with all sides square. Sosa also thinks that the English expressions ‘cube’ and ‘closed solid with all sides square’ express the same property. Hence, C<sub>1</sub> above is *true* and *does follow* from A and RCT. Our reluctance to accept C<sub>1</sub>, Sosa claims, stems from confusing it with the following false claim:

C<sub>1</sub>’ No one can consciously think of *being a cube* as bearing the relation of identity to *being a cube* (or *being a cube* being constituted out of *being a cube* by *identity*) without thinking of *being a cube* as the bearer of *conjunction* to the properties of being a closed solid and having all sides square.

Sosa’s account has many merits. The idea that analyses state how the analyzed thing is composed out of other things and what the mode of composition is is powerful and has intuitive appeal. Further, that Sosa’s account entails that being a cube and being a closed solid with all sides square just are the same property, and more generally that on his view in giving analyses one is trying to say what the thing being analyzed *is* are virtues of the view. One difficulty with Sosa’s view is that he doesn’t explain why it is that we confuse the true C<sub>1</sub> with the false C<sub>1</sub>’. Further, being forced to an error theory on which we are always wrong about the truth-value of sentences like C<sub>1</sub> is a significant cost. Finally, Sosa doesn’t say what distinguishes *philosophical* analyses from other things that appear to be analyses in his sense. A<sub>1</sub> after all is not a philosophical analysis. Further, recall the example of H<sub>2</sub>O we have discussed. It is plausible that this tells us the constituents of the property of being water and how they are combined in the complex property of being water. So this appears to be an analysis in Sosa’s sense. But it clearly is not a philosophical analysis. One would want an account of what makes an analysis philosophical. Similar remarks apply to ‘To be a brother is to be a male sibling’, which again appears to be an analysis in some sense, but not a philosophical analysis.

Ackerman (1981, 1986) gives an account of analysis on which properties are the objects of analysis.<sup>6</sup> Ackerman’s (1986) version of the paradox of analysis is that if the following is a correct analysis:

(3) To be an instance of knowledge is to be an instance of justified true belief

then the property of being knowledge must just be the property of being a justified true belief. But then 3 expresses the same proposition as

(3a) To be knowledge is to be knowledge

But of course there is reason to think 3 and 3a do not express the same proposition (3a is trivial; 3 can be informative, etc.). Ackerman blocks the paradox by formulating an account of analysis according to which when a property P provides the analysis of a property Q, P and Q are nonetheless distinct properties.<sup>7</sup> Hence, 3 and 3a do not express the same proposition on Ackerman’s view. Of course, the pressing question for such a view is: what relation

<sup>6</sup> Ackerman 1981 talks of concepts being the objects of analysis. Ackerman 1986 talks instead of properties and makes clear that she uses ‘concept’ and ‘property’ interchangeably (p. 306).

<sup>7</sup> Chisholm and Potter 1981 is another account on which when P analyzes Q, P and Q are distinct (Chisholm and Potter take properties to be the objects of analysis). Chisholm and Potter define a

does property P bear to the distinct property Q when P analyzes Q? The first two conditions are: (i) P and Q are necessarily coextensive; (ii) it is knowable a priori that P and Q are coextensive. However, as Ackerman acknowledges, these two conditions are not sufficient for something being a philosophical analysis since they don't rule out the property of being the fourth root of 1296 as providing an analysis of the property of being 6. The final condition for P to provide a philosophical analysis of Q is that the claim that necessarily to be Q is to be P can be justified by the 'philosophical example/counterexample method': we formulate hypothetical test cases and ask our subject K: 'Is this a case of Q?'. We then contrast the descriptions of cases in which K answers affirmatively with those in which she does not. *Generalizing* from these descriptions we arrive at the properties and their mode of combination that constitute the analysis of (K's notion of) Q.

One difficulty with this account is raised by Ackerman (1986) herself. Ackerman's third condition on analyses is designed to get beyond something that is merely a priori knowable to be coextensive with Q and necessarily coextensive with Q (on pain of things like *triangularity* being an analysis of *trilaterality*). However, suppose upon hearing K's answers as to which cases are Q and which aren't I *generalize* to P being the analysis of Q. Now take any property  $R \neq P$  that is a priori knowable to be coextensive with Q and that is necessarily coextensive with Q. Given K's responses I could just as easily have *generalized* to R being the analysis of Q. After all, nothing has been said about how to generalize to P from K's answers as to which hypothetical cases are Q except that P must capture those answers. But if P does, then R will, since P, Q and R are necessarily coextensive (and a priori knowable to be coextensive). Hence, for all that has been said, Ackerman's third condition that was supposed to get beyond P being merely necessarily coextensive with Q and a priori knowable to be coextensive with Q fails to do so since it fails to distinguish between P (which, we can suppose, *does* analyze Q) and an arbitrary property R that is merely necessarily coextensive with Q and knowable a priori to be so.

A second difficulty is that the third condition essentially says that the claim that necessarily something is Q iff it is P can be justified by a certain kind of philosophical inquiry. Suppose the claim that necessarily something is Q iff it is P *can* be so justified (and satisfies Ackerman's other two conditions). Then the fact that it can be so justified is either a brute fact or supervenes on some other relation between P and Q. The former seems implausible: how could it be a brute fact that the claim that necessarily something is Q iff it is P be the possible outcome of a certain sort of philosophical inquiry? Hence it must be that there is some as yet undiscovered relation R that obtains between P and Q and that explains *why* the claim that necessarily something is Q iff it is P can be justified in the way described. In that case, arguably that P and Q stand in R ought to be Ackerman's third condition on philosophical analyses. But then Ackerman hasn't really given us an account of analysis. Instead she has told us that P analyzes Q iff (i) P is necessarily coextensive with Q; (ii) it is knowable a priori that P is coextensive with Q; and (iii) there is some relation R between P and Q that explains why the claim that necessarily something is Q iff it is P can be justified

number of quasi-logical notions and use them to define how P and Q have to be related for P to analyze Q. However, in giving their definitions of the notions that are used to define what an analysis is, Chisholm and Potter rely on a number of undefined notions (specifically, conceiving, and attributing) whose application I simply don't understand. Thus I am unable to determine whether pairs of properties stand in the relation defined using these notions or not.

by the philosophical method described. Until we are told what R is, we really don't have an account of philosophical analysis. One way to see this is that Ackerman's third condition was designed to distinguish philosophical analyses from things like

(4) For all x, x is 6 iff x is x is the fourth root of 1296

that satisfy Ackerman's other two conditions on philosophical analyses. It is very unsatisfying to be told that 3 is a philosophical analysis and 4 isn't because though they both satisfy conditions 1 and 2 on philosophical analyses, only 3 can be the outcome of a certain type of philosophical inquiry. Of course, what is needed here is an explanation of *why* this is so.

Related to this, as with Sosa's account, nothing in Ackerman's account tells us how philosophical analyses differ from things like 'To be a brother is to be a male sibling' and 'Water is H<sub>2</sub>O', which, as indicated, also appear to be analyses in some sense.

A final difficulty with Ackerman's view is shared by all views on which when P analyzes Q, P and Q are distinct properties. This just seems not to capture what we take ourselves to be doing in attempting to analyze some property. In so doing, we take ourselves to be trying to say what the property *is*, as I mentioned in discussing Sosa 1983. We do not take ourselves to be trying to come up with a property *intimately related* to the property we are trying to analyze. Perhaps if there were no plausible account of analysis on which in some sense the analyzing property and analyzed property are the same, we would be forced to an account on which these properties are different. But it doesn't appear to be a view we should embrace otherwise.

Jeffrey C. King's [1998, 2007] account of analyses begins by assuming that analyses will be stated by means of universally quantified biconditionals:

$\forall x$  (x is knowledge iff x is a justified true belief).

For simplicity, King assumes that the term of the left of the biconditional is syntactically simple and the term on the right is syntactically complex. King's framework for resolving the paradox of analysis comprises three elements, which King claims can be independently motivated. That this is so, King claims, makes his resolution of the paradox attractive.

The first element is the claim, endorsed by Sosa as we have seen as well, that some properties and relations are complex and are "made up" of other properties and relations. To take a very simple example, the property of being a brother is complex and is made up out of the properties of being male and being a sibling. These properties are combined conjunctively in the bachelor property.<sup>8</sup> Call the properties and relations that combine to make up a complex property or relation the latter's *components*.

The second element of King's framework is some version of a view about propositions defended in King [2007, 2009]. What needs to be assumed here is that the structure of a proposition is very close to the syntactic structure of the sentence expressing it at the level of syntax where quantifier scope is explicitly represented. In effect, this means that a proposition is a structured entity whose structure is very much like the structure of the sentence expressing it, where the semantic values of the words in the sentence are structured in the

<sup>8</sup> These latter properties may themselves be complex.

proposition more or less the way the words with those semantic values are structured in the sentence.

The final element of King's framework is the claim that there are at least three categories of words, where what distinguishes the words in each category from words in the others are the standards of competence governing the words. In category one are words that express complex properties and relations, where to be competent with the words requires one to know the component properties and relations and how they are combined to yield the complex property or relation expressed by the word. 'Bachelor' is a paradigm of a category one word: to be competent with it one must know that 'bachelor' expresses a complex property that results from conjunctively combining *being male* and *being unmarried*.<sup>9</sup> Category two words are words that express complex properties or relations where competence with the word requires one to be able to say whether the property is instantiated or not in a (possibly hypothetical) situation, given sufficient information about the situation and given that the situation is one in which the property is *paradigmatically* instantiated or not.<sup>10</sup> Paradigms of category two words are things like 'knowledge', 'reference', 'chair' etc. Finally, competence with words in category three neither requires speakers to be able to articulate the component properties and relations of the complex property or relation expressed by the word, nor properly apply the word in clear (possibly hypothetical) cases. It is hard to say exactly what competence *does* require here. Category three words include words that many have called *natural kind words* such as 'aluminum', 'elm', and so on.

Now on King's view of analysis, it is complex properties and relations that are the objects of analysis. In stating an analysis, one is saying what the component properties and relations are that make up the complex property being analyzed and how they are combined to form this complex property. Given King's assumption about the syntactic structure of sentences stating analyses, and his assumptions about the structures of propositions expressed by sentences, a sentence expressing a purported analysis and the proposition it expresses will look as follows:

$$S_a \text{ [[Every } x\text{] [[R}(x)\text{] iff [C}(x)\text{]]]}$$

$$P_a \text{ [[Every}^* x\text{] [[R}^*(x)\text{] iff } \mathcal{C}(x)\text{]]]}$$

where Every\* is the semantic value of 'Every', R\* is the semantic value of 'R' (and is the property being analyzed) and  $\mathcal{C}(x)$  is what the complex predicate 'C(x)' contributes to the proposition expressed by  $S_a$ . Now according to King, in the case of entities like  $\mathcal{C}(x)$  that are contributed to propositions by syntactically complex predicates, in the definition of truth for propositions such entities will be mapped to properties. Take a simple case like the following proposition:

$$\text{[[Mary}^*\text{[hit}^*\text{ [Bill}^*\text{]]}]}$$

<sup>9</sup> Of course ordinary competent speakers wouldn't put things this way, but that is how we as theorists would describe them, given our commitment to the first element of King's framework.

<sup>10</sup> The requirement that the situation be one in which the property in question is paradigmatically instantiated or not reflects the idea that competence with the word in question requires the speakers to "get it right" in cases in which the word clearly applies or clearly doesn't. Also, since category one words likely satisfy the condition stated for category two, we should add that no category one words are in category two.

where  $[[\text{hit}^*[\text{Bill}^*]]$  is the  $\mathcal{E}(x)$ -like complex entity contributed to this proposition by the complex predicate ‘hit Bill’ in the sentence ‘Mary hit Bill’. In the definition of truth for propositions, this entity must be mapped to the property of *hitting Bill* and then the above proposition is true iff Mary possesses this property. In such a case, King says that  $[[\text{hit}^*[\text{Bill}^*]]$  represents the property of hitting Bill. Further, let’s call  $\text{hit}^*$  and  $\text{Bill}^*$  the *constituents* of the complex, subpropositional  $\mathcal{E}(x)$ -like entity  $[[\text{hit}^*[\text{Bill}^*]]$ . Finally, note that it is plausible that  $\text{hit}^*$  and  $\text{Bill}^*$  are *components* of the presumably complex (and relational) property of *hitting Bill*. Exactly similar remarks apply to  $\mathcal{E}(x)$  in  $P_a$ : it will be mapped to a property by the definition of truth for propositions and it will have constituents. We can now state King’s account of analysis: a proposition of the form  $P_a$  is an (correct) analysis iff (i) the property  $R^*$  is identical to the property represented by  $\mathcal{E}(x)$ ; and (ii) the constituents of  $\mathcal{E}(x)$  are components of the property  $R^*$ .

This does not yet distinguish *philosophical* analyses from (what are arguably on King’s account) analyses like the uninformative analysis 1 and the ‘scientific analysis’  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  above. King claims that philosophical analyses are distinguished from the former in terms of the sort of epistemic relations typical members of a linguistic community bear to the property being analyzed. In turn, King thinks that the epistemic relations typical members of a linguistic community bear to a property are reflected in the standards of competence associated with the word expressing the property in the community. Hence, a proposition  $P$  is a philosophical analysis for a linguistic community  $C$  iff (i)  $P$  is an analysis; and (ii) there is a sentence of the language of  $C$  that expresses  $P$ , and the word that contributes the analyzed property to  $P$  belongs to category two.<sup>11</sup> King’s idea is that if the word expressing the analyzed property belongs to category one or three, the result will be an uninformative analysis or a scientific analysis, respectively. Further, King thinks that if one is a member of a linguistic community  $C$  where the word  $w$  expressing a given property in the language of  $C$  belongs to category two, speakers’ competence with  $w$  in  $C$  allows speakers to consider hypothetical situations and determine whether the property expressed by  $w$  is instantiated in those situations or not. This puts speakers in a position to formulate hypotheses about the analysis of the property expressed by  $w$ .

As to problems with King’s view, one might think that true statements such as ‘To be good is to be pleasurable.’<sup>12</sup> are philosophical analysis. But on King’s view, they won’t be since the predicate doesn’t have constituents whose semantic values are components of the property being analyzed. Hence, there is no sense in which the property of being good is analyzed here on King’s view of analysis. A second worry concerns how we could ever know an analysis is correct on King’s account. Given a purported analysis of the form of  $S_a$  above, suppose we could come to know that it is necessarily true. Still, how could we ever determine that the further conditions required for a successful analysis are met? Really, this amounts to asking how we could know that we have successfully identified the components (and how they are combined) of a complex property or relation. This epistemological worry applies to any account on which analyses purport to tell us the components of a complex property or relation and how they are combined in it.

<sup>11</sup> For simplicity King assumes here that there are not two words or more words of the language of  $C$  belonging to different categories that express the analyzed property.

<sup>12</sup> Suppose, counterfactually, that this is a true statement.



### 3. VIEWS OF ANALYSIS THAT ARE NOT AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE PARADOX OF ANALYSIS

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The views we have looked at so far have been views of philosophical analysis that try to explain the paradox of analysis and the felt difference between 3 and 3a as set out earlier. However, there are views of analysis that are aimed at addressing quite different issues.

One such view is that of David Lewis (1966, 1970, 1994). Lewis (1994) holds that it is an a priori truth that there are fundamental (perfectly natural) properties and relations, and that every contingent truth must be made true by the pattern of instantiation of these fundamental properties and relations. As he puts it, ‘The whole truth about the world, including the mental part, supervenes on this pattern.’<sup>13</sup> Lewis further takes the fundamental properties and relations to be physical. This claim Lewis calls *materialism*. Of course there is no a priori guarantee that materialism is correct. But putting together the a priori claim that everything supervenes on the pattern of instantiation of the fundamental properties and relations, with the a posteriori claim that the fundamental properties and relations are all physical, we get the a posteriori claim that everything supervenes on the pattern of instantiation of physical properties and relations. In particular, the mental items so supervene.

But this raises a puzzle for Lewis. Some features of the world that supervene on the physical properties and relations will be given by extremely complex physical conditions that are too complex for beings like us to entertain or track. But mental features aren’t like that. We seem to do a surprisingly good job of tracking the beliefs, desires, and so forth of others. This must mean, Lewis thinks, that there is a certain kind of simplicity about mental phenomena when looked at in the right way. It is the job of conceptual analysis to reveal that simplicity.

Here Lewis appeals to a largely tacit theory we all grasp of how we work mentally. Lewis call this theory *folk psychology*. Lewis thinks folk psychology is largely correct and that it is a powerful instrument for predicting and explaining human behavior. For any given mental state *M*, folk psychology will have principles telling us the causal relations between *M*, perceptual input, behavioral output and other mental states (e.g. it might tell us very roughly that pain is caused by certain perceptual inputs, causes certain behavioral outputs, and leads to being in other mental states like anger, etc). Imagine that we conjoin all the principles of folk psychology and let  $M_1, \dots, M_n$  be names of all the mental states the theory mentions.<sup>14</sup> Let this sentence be ‘ $T[M_1, \dots, M_n]$ ’. This, in effect, gives us our simultaneous conceptual analysis of the mental states in our folk psychology by assigning to the *n*-tuples of these states a joint causal role, including causal relations between the mental states

<sup>13</sup> See p. 292. Lewis’ gloss on the supervenience of everything on the instantiation of perfectly natural properties and relations is on that same page: ‘If two possible worlds were exactly isomorphic in their patterns of coinstantiation of fundamental properties and relations, they would thereby be exactly alike *simpliciter*.’

<sup>14</sup> For an explanation of why we can use *names* of mental states and why if the conjunction is infinitely long there is no problem, see Lewis 1970 p. 80.

(as well as causal relations to perceptual input and behavioral output). We can think of 'T[M<sub>1</sub>, ... ,M<sub>n</sub>]' as saying 'the states that typically occupy the M<sub>1</sub> ... ,M<sub>n</sub> roles are typically causally related to each other, perceptual input and behavioral output as follows: ...'. Now it is an open question and an empirical question what states do in fact occupy these roles. But if Lewis is right and every feature of the world supervenes on physical properties, the occupier of the roles are ultimately physical states. And this, Lewis thinks, gives us a simple argument for the view that mental states are ultimately identical to physical states. For simplicity, let's suppress the idea that the mental states M<sub>1</sub>, ... ,M<sub>n</sub> are interdefined and focus on a single mental state M. The argument that M is a physical state runs as follows:

Mental state M = the occupier of the M role (conceptual analysis)  
 The occupier of the M role = physical state P (empirical claim)  
 Therefore, mental state M = physical state P

It should be noted that the second premise here is contingent, according to Lewis. Hence, the conclusion is contingent as well. Some different physical state could have occupied the M role (or even some nonphysical state).<sup>15</sup> It is important to see that for Lewis, P *is* the state M. So had things been different, some other state would have been M.

In summary, for Lewis conceptual analysis is simply a means for picking out the physical state that occupies a certain role, where formulating what that role is constitutes a conceptual analysis of the relevant notion. This is done in the service of reconciling physicalism with mental features of the world. As a result, Lewis's view of conceptual analysis has no obvious application to the paradox of analysis.

Whatever the merits of Lewis' view here regarding mental states, the question arises whether Lewis' conception of conceptual analysis is broadly applicable to other philosophically interesting concepts. Most of the concerns center around what the theory is that is the analogue of folk psychology for the other philosophically interesting concepts one might hope to analyze. In the case of ethical concepts, for example, it is not clear that there is a consistent folk theory of morality, since there is wide-ranging moral disagreement. Further, in the case of virtually *any* philosophically interesting concept, one must be given some idea of how to determine what claims involving the concept, and related concepts, count as part of the relevant folk theory, as opposed to merely being claims involving the concept and related concepts.

A related view of conceptual analysis appears in the work of Frank Jackson (1994, 1998) and David Chalmers (1996). We'll put things in Chalmers' terms here, though Jackson's views in crucial respects are similar. It will be useful to put things in terms of the two-dimensional semantic framework Jackson 1998 and Chalmers 1996 employ.<sup>16</sup>

In this framework, expressions are associated with two functions from possible worlds to extensions. Such functions are generally called *intensions*. A word like 'water' has what is often called a *primary intension*, which maps a possible world to the stuff that is water in that world.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> I suppress here Lewis' related idea that it may even be that for nonhuman animals or aliens (or even subpopulations of humans), something other than P does occupy the M role for them. In that case we would have to relativize to kinds of things K, and instead of the second premise above, we would have: M in kind K = P. See Lewis 1994 pp. 305–307.

<sup>16</sup> For criticism of the two-dimensional approach, see Soames 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Chalmers actually uses the set of *centered* possible worlds as the domain of primary intensions. For simplicity I'll ignore that here.

The idea here is that when the function is applied to a world, it gives as its output what the extension of 'water' would be if that world turns out to be actual. So consider a world where the oceans and lakes are filled with a chemical XYZ (which is not H<sub>2</sub>O). XYZ also falls from the skies there during storms, comes out of faucets, and so on. The intuition here is that if the world turns out to be like that, water is XYZ. So the primary intension of 'water' maps the XYZ world to XYZ. Of course, it also maps the actual world to H<sub>2</sub>O. To repeat, it maps any world to what would be water in that world if the actual world turns out that way.

But 'water' also has a secondary intension. This intension maps a possible world, now considered as counterfactual, to what is water at that world given that water is H<sub>2</sub>O. When we consider the XYZ world as counterfactual, and ask what is water there, the answer is that water is H<sub>2</sub>O there and that there is no water in the XYZ world. Given that water in the actual world is H<sub>2</sub>O, water is H<sub>2</sub>O in *every* possible world. Hence, the secondary intension of 'water' maps every possible world to H<sub>2</sub>O. As we've just seen, the primary and secondary intentions are different for an expression like 'water'. This is because what we will say is water at a given world *w* depends on whether we are thinking of *w* as the way the actual world turned out (primary intension) or as a counterfactual world, holding the actual world, in which water is H<sub>2</sub>O, fixed (secondary intension). However, for some expressions the primary and secondary intensions collapse. Consider 'square'. Whether we consider a world *w* as how the actual world turned out or as a counterfactual world (holding the actual world fixed) makes no difference to what we would say are squares at the world in question. So primary and secondary intentions collapse for such a word.

Now specifying the primary intension for a term Chalmers calls *conceptual analysis*. The primary intension encodes the way the secondary intension gets fixed given the way the actual world turns out to be. Hence, the primary intension encapsulates the application conditions for a term given a world considered as actual. In the case of 'water', very roughly speaking it applies to the local watery stuff in any world considered as actual. That is why it yields XYZ at the XYZ world and H<sub>2</sub>O in the actual world. We discover what the primary intension of a term is by considering various ways the world might be and asking: 'If the world turns out that way, what would water be?' So according to Chalmers, doing this sort of conceptual analysis is an a priori enterprise.

The main point for doing conceptual analysis for Chalmers is to give reductive explanations of various phenomena. A reductive explanation of a phenomenon for Chalmers is an explanation of the phenomenon in terms of microphysics. Specifically, let *P* be the conjunction of microphysical truths about the world.<sup>18</sup> Then consider the material conditional:

(5)  $P \rightarrow$  there is water

If this conditional is knowable a priori, then *there being water* has a reductive explanation according to Chalmers. For in that case, 'we show that there is a sort of transparent epistemic connection between the microphysical and macrophysical phenomena.'<sup>19</sup> Now in judging whether 5 is known a priori we must be appealing to the primary intension of

<sup>18</sup> For the purposes at hand, Chalmers actually wants to conjoin *P* with a 'that's all' clause that says that the world contains exactly what is implied by *P*, and some indexical information. See Chalmers and Jackson 2001 pp. 317–318. I ignore this for simplicity here.

<sup>19</sup> Chalmers and Jackson 2001 p. 351.

'water' in considering the consequent. We are asking whether, if the world turns out the way *P* says, there is water. So for Chalmers, the interest in the primary intension of terms, and hence conceptual analysis, is in considering whether a reductive explanation can be given of what the term applies to by way of considering whether a conditional like 5 is knowable a priori.

As to worries with Chalmers' view, first it is questionable whether terms like 'water' really have primary intensions that are knowable a priori. Since the primary intensions encode how a term comes to pick out what it does in a given world considered as actual, the claim that such intensions are knowable a priori amounts to the claim that we can know a priori how our terms came to pick out what they do. See Laurence and Margolis 2003 for discussion. Further, the claim that 5 must be knowable a priori for water to have a reductive explanation is controversial. See Block and Stalnaker 1999 and Chalmers and Jackson 2001 for discussion. For pro and con discussion of other issues regarding the Chalmers–Jackson approach to conceptual analysis, as well as Lewis' discussed above, see Braddon-Mitchell and Nola 2009.

Finally, though Chalmers doesn't think otherwise, it is worth noting that conceptual analysis as Chalmers understand it does nothing to address the paradox of analysis. For consider the following sentences:

- (6) For all *x*, *x* is an instance of knowledge iff *x* is a justified true belief.
- (6a) For all *x*, *x* is an instance of knowledge iff *x* is an instance of knowledge.

On Chalmers' view, the primary and secondary intensions collapse for these sentences; and both sentences have the same intension. Thus, they are not assigned any different semantic value on a view like Chalmers' by means of which we could avoid the paradox of analysis. To repeat, that this is not surprising since Chalmers' notion of conceptual analysis was crafted for another purpose.

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