

# ANALYTICITY AGAIN<sup>1</sup>

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## *Introduction*

It would be ever so nice if there were a viable analytic/synthetic distinction. Though nobody knows for sure, there would seem to be several major philosophical projects that having one would advance. For example: analytic sentences<sup>2</sup> are supposed to have their truth values solely in virtue of the meanings (together with the syntactic arrangement) of their constituents; i.e., their truth values are supposed to supervene on their linguistic properties alone.<sup>3</sup> So they are true in every possible world where they mean what they mean here.<sup>4</sup> So they are necessarily true. So if there were a viable analytic/synthetic distinction ('a/s distinction' often hereafter), we would understand the necessity of at least some necessary truths. If, in particular, it were to turn out that the logical and/or the mathematical truths are analytic, we would understand why *they* are necessary. It would be ever so nice to understand why the logical and/or mathematical truths are necessary (cf. Gibson 1998; Quine 1998).

Any account of necessity would be welcome, but one according to which necessary truths are analytic has special virtues. Necessity isn't, of course, an epistemic property. Still, suppose that the necessity of a sentence arises from the meanings of its parts. It's natural to assume that one of the things one knows in virtue of knowing one's language is what the expressions of the language mean (cf., e.g., Boghossian 1994). A treatment of modality in terms of analyticity therefore connects the concept of necessity with the concept of knowledge; and knowledge *is*, of course, an epistemic property. So maybe if there is an a/s distinction, we could explain why the necessary truths, or at least some of the necessary truths, are knowable *a priori* by anybody who knows a language that can express them (cf. Quine 1991). It bears emphasis that not every theory of

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<sup>2</sup> For convenience of exposition, we'll use 'analytic' to mean *analytically true* unless notice is given to the contrary. We suppose the points we'll make to apply to analytically false sentences *mutatis mutandis*.

<sup>3</sup> "...a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact" (Quine 1953, p. 21). We will ignore complexities introduced by token reflexives and the like (cf., Kaplan 1989, p. 509).

<sup>4</sup> Where, roughly, a 'possible world' is one in which all the logical truths hold. Different possible worlds are specified by different assignments of truth-values to the contingent propositions.

necessity yields a corresponding treatment of apriority; doing so is a special virtue of connecting modality with meaning. It would be ever so nice to understand how *a priori* knowledge is possible.

And that's not all. Lots of philosophers who are interested in the metaphysics of semantical properties find attractive the idea that the meaning of an expression supervenes on its conceptual/inferential role. ('CR'; cf., Sellars 1954, Harman 1987, and Block 1986 and references therein). It is, however, a plausible objection to CR semantics that it courts a ruinous holism unless there is some way to distinguish meaning-constitutive inferences from the rest (Fodor and Lepore 1991, 1992). A tenable *a/s* distinction might resolve this tension; perhaps, the meaning constitutive-inferences could be identified with the analytic ones. In practice, it's pretty widely agreed that saving *a/s* is a condition for saving CR (cf., e.g., Block 1986, Peacocke 1992).

And, finally there are those who just find it intuitively plausible that there are analytic truths. For many linguists, it's a main goal of 'lexical semantics' to predict which sentences express them; typically, by 'decomposing' the meanings of some words into their definitions. On this sort of view, intuitions of analyticity play much the role vis-à-vis theories of meaning that intuitions of grammaticality do vis-à-vis theories of syntax (cf., Katz 1972).

But, for all that, a lot of philosophers have been persuaded (largely by considerations that Quine raised) that there is no unquestion-begging way to formulate a serious *a/s* distinction (cf., e.g., Gibson 1988, chap 4, Harman 1999, Lepore 1995). Perhaps, the moral is that we will have to learn to do philosophy without it. If, in consequence, notions like necessity, apriority and definition seem deeply mysterious, so be it.

But now comes Paul Boghossian, who in several places (1996, 1997) offers, if not actually to delineate the *a/s* distinction, then at least to deduce its existence from mere Meaning Realism (MR), a doctrine which, he rightly says, is common ground to many who reject *a/s* itself (including, by the way, the present authors). In the course of setting out his argument, Boghossian also has much to say about CR semantics and about the logical constants; he's got a lot of irons in the fire, and his discussion illuminates a

variety of issues. But, on balance, we think he has his irons by the wrong end. So, anyhow, we will try to convince you.

But first a digression: Gil Harman (following Quine) has famously offered an across-the-board argument that the notion of analyticity is untenable; namely, that the truth of analytic sentences is supposed somehow to be independent of ‘how the world is’, but that it’s puzzling how the truth of anything *could* be independent of how the world is. How, for example, could a stipulation, or a linguistic convention (implicit or otherwise) make a proposition *true*? How could our undertaking to respect the inference from ‘bachelor’ to ‘unmarried’ make it true that bachelors are unmarried?

There is an obvious problem in understanding how the truth of a statement can be independent of the way the world is and depend entirely on the meaning of the statement. Why is it not a fact about the world that copper is a metal such that, if this were not a fact, the statement ‘copper is a metal’ would not express a truth? And why doesn’t the truth expressed by ‘copper is copper’ depend in part on the general fact that everything is self-identical? (Harman 1999, p. 119)

We don’t wish to take a stand on whether Harman’s point is decisive; but we do want to remark on what Boghossian says by way of reply; which, if we are reading him correctly, is something like this: It *is* a mystery how stipulations, implicit definitions, conventions, and the like could, all by themselves, make propositions true. And, in fact, they don’t even purport to.

All that is involved in the thesis of Implicit Definition is the claim that the conventional assignment of truth to a sentence determines what proposition that sentence expresses (if any); such a view is entirely silent about what (if anything) determines the truth of the claim that is thereby expressed – *a fortiori*, it is silent about whether our conventions determine it. (Boghossian 1997, p. 351)

Actually, we don’t understand this, and we doubt that Harman would find it moving (cf., Harman, 1996, pp. 144-147, for his response). It’s Boghossian’s view that you can make a sentence true by stipulation; and that that very stipulation determines which proposition the sentences expresses. Call the sentence S and the proposition P. Surely, if S is true, then P is true, since it’s a truism (assuming sentences have truth values at all) that each sentence has the same truth-value as the proposition it expresses. It’s thus unclear to us why making a sentence true by stipulation (which Boghossian

agrees is something one can do) isn't *thereby* making the corresponding proposition true by stipulation (which, we take it, Boghossian denies is something that one can do).

However, there is perhaps an exegetical way out of this. It may be that, given what Boghossian means by 'what makes a proposition true,' not every sufficient condition for a proposition to be true is *ipso facto* what *makes* it true. Perhaps, in the usage Boghossian intends, only (what is sometimes called) its 'truth maker' can make a proposition true. So, for example, the truth maker for the proposition expressed by 'The cat is on the mat' is presumably a certain state of affairs 'in the world'; *viz.*, that the cat is on the mat. Accordingly, not everything that entails this proposition counts as its truth maker. If the cat is on the mat or in the tub, and the cat is not in the tub, then the cat is on the mat. But, presumably, the state of affairs that (the cat is either on the mat or in the tub, and that it's not in the tub) isn't the truth maker for 'The cat is on the mat'. The truth maker for 'The cat is on the mat' is that the cat is on the mat, as previously remarked. This idea is, clearly, not without its difficulties, but perhaps it's the sort of thing Boghossian has in mind. Let's suppose so for the sake of the discussion.

So, then, Boghossian is saying that, although stipulating that a sentence is true does entail that the corresponding proposition is true, *that* the sentence is true by stipulation isn't (typically) the truth maker of the proposition that it expresses. On this reading, Boghossian doesn't, in fact, tell us what the truth maker of a proposition that is expressed by a sentence that's true by stipulation might be. Which, of course, he has every right not to do.

But we're still puzzled about how he could answer the kind of question that we take Harman to be raising. Let's say: whatever the truth maker for a proposition is, the proposition is true just in case its truth maker is 'in place'. Now consider the proposition expressed by a sentence that is true by stipulation. Presumably, the truth maker for that proposition *must be* in place since the sentence that expresses it is true. If so, then, Harman can object as follows: 'It's not obvious how a stipulation could make the world such that a certain sentence is true of it. But it's also, and equally, not obvious how a stipulation could guarantee that the truth maker of the proposition that a sentence expresses is 'in place'.' In fact, the second question is plausibly just the first one all over again. We think this complaint would be justified were Harman to make it; so, we think,

if Harman's worry about the possibility of truth by stipulation is legitimate, Boghossian has done nothing to make it go away.

End of digression

The following discussion has two parts: First, we consider the main question Boghossian raises: what's the relation between analyticity and Meaning Realism? Second, we discuss Boghossian's views about the viability of CR semanticists as a treatment of the logical particles.

### *Analyticity and Meaning Realism*

The main argument of Boghossian's paper is starkly simple. A Meaning Realist is, by stipulation, somebody who thinks that there are facts about the meaning of expressions. But, Boghossian says, if there are facts about the meaning of expressions, then it must be at least possible that the very same facts about meaning could hold of two *different* expressions. But if the same meaning facts hold of two different expressions, then those expressions are synonymous. Suppose two sentences differ only in respect of synonymous expressions. Then a hypothetical that has either sentence as antecedent and the other as consequent is *ipso facto* analytic. So, *a fortiori*, if Meaning Realism is assumed, it must be at least possible that there should be forms of words that express analytic truths. So, *a fortiori*, there *couldn't* be a principled argument against a/s that a Meaning Realist can accept. So, *a fortiori*, Quine didn't have a principled argument against a/s that a Meaning Realist could accept. QED.<sup>5</sup>

We think that this argument is fallacious; in particular, it relies on a crucial conflation of *analyticity* with *synonymy* (a conflation which, by the way, Quine's own usage encourages (1953, p. 23)). While the inference from Meaning Realism to the possibility of synonymy is sound, the inference from the possibility of synonymy to the possibility of analyticity fails; so we claim. On our view, synonymy is necessary but not sufficient for analyticity; and the further conditions that must be assumed to get to the latter from the former are highly substantive.

We'll set out the argument for this in just a moment, but first we want to be explicit about the intuition that it turns on: the traditional understanding is that "'Fa iff

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<sup>5</sup> Quine isn't himself a Meaning Realist of course (see, e.g., Quine (1990), sec 21, p. 52); so he doesn't have to care whether MR would entail the possibility of a/s.

'Ga' is analytic" is true iff 'F' and 'G' *express the same concept*.<sup>6</sup> Correspondingly, our argument will be that if this is what you mean by analyticity, then the analyticity of 'Fa iff Ga' does *not* follow from the assumption that the same meaning facts hold of 'F' and 'G' (i.e., from the fact that 'F' and 'G' are synonyms). That's because it's *prima facie* plausible that synonyms needn't express the same concept; they may only express concepts that are synonymous.<sup>7</sup> So far, then, it's perfectly OK to assume that there could be distinct expressions of which the same meaning facts hold, while denying that, if there were, there would *ipso facto* be analytic inferences. Precisely contrary to Boghossian.

One reason why it's *prima facie* plausible that (e.g.) 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' correspond to concepts that are synonymous but distinct is that it's *prima facie* plausible that the concepts that they correspond to (*viz.*, BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN) have different possession conditions.<sup>8</sup> What makes this plausible is that one of the English locutions that expresses the concept UNMARRIED MAN is, of course, 'unmarried man'; and it's clear on the face of it that that locution contains, as a constituent, a word that expresses the concept UNMARRIED. It may be, of course, that the word 'bachelor' also expresses the complex concept UNMARRIED MAN (as opposed to expressing a synonymous but primitive concept BACHELOR). But that would need arguing for in a way that the complexity of the concept that 'unmarried man' expresses does not. Well, since it's self-evident that UNMARRIED and MAN are constituents of UNMARRIED MAN, it's likewise self-evident that having UNMARRIED and MAN is a possession condition for having the concept that 'UNMARRIED MAN' names; you can't have a whole unless you have all of its parts.

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<sup>6</sup> We're not, of course, suggesting that analyticities have to be biconditional; the sentence 'Bachelors are unmarried' would be a counterexample. But this sentence's analyticity is usually thought to depend on its being derivable, by logic alone, from the biconditional analyticity of 'Bachelors are unmarried men.' More on this presently.

<sup>7</sup> It's hard to find a terminology that doesn't beg the questions at issue here. We'll say that concepts are synonymous just in case they have the same content. We mean this formulation to leave it open whether concepts with the same content are identical. See fn. 14 below.

<sup>8</sup> We use formulas in quotes as names of expressions and (for the most part) italics as names of meanings (as in 'bachelor' means *unmarried man*'). Sometimes, however, we'll say of one quoted formula that it means another ('bachelor' means 'unmarried man'). This is short for saying that the two formulas mean the same, *viz.*, that they are synonymous. Expressions in caps (e.g., 'BACHELOR') are names of concepts. NB: *names* of concepts rather than structural descriptions. Thus the notation is neutral as to whether the concept that 'BACHELOR' names is complex.

It follows, of course, that the complexity of the *name* of the concept UNMARRIED MAN proves nothing one way or the other about the complexity of the concept that it names.

But the corresponding claim about the possession conditions for BACHELOR would be highly tendentious; the assumption that either UNMARRIED or MAN is a part of BACHELOR is not to be taken for granted in the course of a discussion of the analyticity (or otherwise) of 'Bachelors are unmarried men'. Indeed, the claim that BACHELOR has any constituents at all is tendentious and not to be assumed in this context. Notice, for example, that it wouldn't follow from the mere necessity of 'bachelors are unmarried men' that the concept BACHELOR is complex. For (we suppose) not all necessary truths are analytic. In fact, the usual way to argue that UNMARRIED and MAN are constituents of BACHELOR, is to take for granted that 'Bachelors are unmarried men' is analytic (and not just necessary); a dialectic which would, of course, be question-begging in the present context.

So, then, one way to see that it's tendentious to claim that BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN are the same concept is to note the *prima facie* difference between their possession conditions. Another way is to note that to take their identity for granted would beg the question against Conceptual Atomism.<sup>9</sup> For, suppose that Conceptual Atomism is true; then it's in principle possible to have BACHELOR without having *any* other concepts. *A fortiori*, it's possible to have BACHELOR but not MAN or UNMARRIED.

Perhaps, for example, you are into informational semantics (Dretske 1981). In that case, you may well hold that the only condition that is required for a mind to possess the concept BACHELOR is that it is causally connected ("in the right way") to actual or possible instantiations of *bachelorhood*. But if, as may be supposed, *bachelorhood* and *unmarriedmanhood* are the same property, then all that's required to have the concept BACHELOR is being causally connected (in the right way) to *unmarriedmanhood*. *A fortiori*, it's not required that one have the concept UNMARRIED or the concept MAN. *A fortiori*, if atomism is true, BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN must be different concepts since, clearly, you can't have UNMARRIED MAN unless you have UNMARRIED and MAN.

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<sup>9</sup>I.e., the view that there are no cases in which satisfying the possession conditions for one concept entails satisfying the possession conditions for some other concept. For discussion, see Fodor and Lepore (1992).

Notice, in passing, that the question whether BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN are identical concepts (which would be required to make ‘Bachelors are unmarried men’ analytic according to our understanding) interacts not only with issues about their respective possession conditions, but also with questions about concept acquisition. This is hardly surprising since, of course, learning a concept is one way of coming to have it. So, just as it’s not self evident that you can’t *have* BACHELOR unless you already have UNMARRIED, it’s also not self-evident that you can’t *learn* BACHELOR unless you’ve already learned UNMARRIED. In fact, as it turns out, there are lots of cases where the order of concept acquisition appears not to be what you would expect on the assumption that synonymy implies identity of concepts. For example, it’s said that ‘dog’ and ‘domestic canine’ correspond to the same concept, so that ‘Dogs are domestic canines’ is analytic. It is, however, pretty clear that, in the order of acquisition, DOG comes before either DOMESTIC or CANINE (sometimes it comes a lot before). Such considerations suggest that there’s a point to insisting that the concepts DOG and DOMESTIC CANINE are *different* (though synonymous); that would explain why you can learn the former without learning the latter. This sort of issue is live in the empirical study of concept acquisition, so philosophers are not allowed to preempt it (cf., Leslie, 2000).

Here’s yet another way to see why inferences from synonymy to analyticity are moot (e.g., that it’s moot whether BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN are the same concepts). The usual way of running the claim that they are the same concept is to suppose, in effect, that they are both the concept UNMARRIED MAN. That is, it’s to assume that the concepts that correspond to definable words are their definitions, where definitions are assumed to be *ipso facto* syntactically complex. But it seems perfectly plausible, first blush at least, that there should be a mind in which the property of *being an unmarried man* is mentally represented by a syntactically primitive expression; for example, by the expression ‘BACHELOR’.<sup>10</sup> Our point is that this sort of issue cannot be settled by fiat; specifically, it can’t be settled by taking for granted that synonymous formulas *ipso facto* express the same concept.

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<sup>10</sup> It’s mostly a verbal issue whether providing a synonym for an expression counts as defining it; if it does, then one syntactically primitive expression can define another. It simplifies the exposition not to count synonyms as definitions. For what it is worth, it’s our intuition that ‘is synonymous with’ is symmetrical but ‘defines’ is not.

Here's yet a fourth way to see that if you require conceptual identity for analyticity, then it's by no means clear that 'Bachelors are unmarried men' and the like are analytic. There's a considerable issue as to whether concepts are to be individuated by their content alone, or by their content together with their structure. Suppose that concepts that express the same property have the same content, and suppose that *water* and  $H_2O$  are the same property; so then the expressions 'water' and ' $H_2O$ ' are synonymous. Someone who accepts all that might want to claim that WATER and  $H_2O$  are nevertheless different concepts, the evidence being that it's possible to believe that a certain liquid is water without believing that it's  $H_2O$ . This would seem to be a fact over and above the apparent difference in the *possession conditions* of the concepts, since it's perfectly possible for someone who has the concept WATER to have the concept  $H_2O$  as well (e.g., he knows that there is an actual or possible chemical compound that has that structure but not that  $H_2O$  and water are the same stuff).

So if (as we claim) analyticity requires concept identity, then, *a fortiori*, merely synonymous concepts don't support analyticities. Why is it, then, that so many philosophers take for granted that if 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are synonyms, the corresponding concepts must be identical (and that if Conceptual Atomism would entail that synonymous concepts can have different possession conditions, then so much the worse for Conceptual Atomism)? We think they're persuaded less by an argument than by a rhetorical question: namely, 'But how could you know that someone is a bachelor and not know that he's unmarried?' Our answer is: 'It's easy'. Imagine a mind that has a concept that applies to bachelors as such, (*viz.*, it has the concept BACHELOR) but no concept that applies to unmarried persons as such (*viz.*, it lacks the concept UNMARRIED). For the owner of that mind, it's perfectly possible to know that bachelorhood is instantiated but not to know that unmarriedness is instantiated too. Indeed, that mind couldn't even frame the hypothesis that if either concept applies, so too does the other.

Notice that, if there's a distinction between synonymous concepts in this kind of case, it's because one is primitive and the other is structurally (*viz.*, syntactically) complex. In fact, all our cases of candidates for conceptual synonymy without concept identity are of this sort. They are what we are relying on to make our case that identity of

conceptual contents isn't sufficient for identity of concepts. It may be that there are no pairs of synonymous but distinct concepts both of which are primitive; if so, then the concepts expressed by 'perhaps' and 'maybe', for example, are maybe identical. This turns out to be quite a complicated issue, and for present purposes we take no stand on it.

So far we have argued for the following hypothetical: *if* analyticities derive from concept identities (as opposed to mere concept synonymies) *then* the inference from Meaning Realism to the possibility of analyticity doesn't go through *sans* premises about the identity conditions for concepts (or for properties, or both); and that no such premises are available without charge. But we haven't argued at all for the antecedent of this hypothetical. That is, we've given no reason, so far, for assuming that only formulas that express identical concepts (and, presumably, some of their logical consequences)<sup>11</sup> are analytically related. In effect, we're accepting the conventional wisdom that, if there are analyticities, they are the sentences that can be turned into logical truths by substituting synonyms for synonyms. But we are denying that substitutions of synonyms for synonyms *ipso facto* preserve analyticity.

But what's the argument for denying this?

Our first point is sort of etymological; *analyticity* is after all supposed to be about *analysis*. The classic understanding of the notion required that concepts have constituent structure and that analytic sentences are true in virtue of the relation between complex concepts and their less complex parts. To enumerate the set of analytic truths in which an expression occurs is therefore tantamount to analyzing its structure. (See fn.6 above). Thus there's a quite standard way of understanding analyticity according to which 'Bachelors are unmarried men' is analytic because it analyzes BACHELOR into its parts. Conversely, it's because the going theory of analyticity is that it arises from the constituent analysis of complex concepts, that so many people have wanted to deny that it could be analytic that whatever is red is colored. (We'll return to this case presently.)

Our second point is sort of historical. The view that constituency relations among concepts are the source of analyticities has been practically universal among philosophers who have endorsed any notion of analyticity (or of 'relations of ideas') whatever. If you

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<sup>11</sup> It's notoriously moot which of the logical consequences of an analytic truth are themselves *ipso facto* analytic. Since we doubt that there are any analytic truths, we don't propose to take a stand on this.

look at what Kant says, for example, the story is that 'All bodies are extended' qualifies as analytic because EXTENDED is part of BODY, but '7 + 5 = 12' is *not* analytic, presumably because there is no unique way of analyzing the concept 12 into its parts (see Kant 1781, Introduction, section 5, pp. 52-53).

In all judgments in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought... this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside the concept A... In the one case I entitle the judgment analytic, in the other synthetic... The former, as adding nothing to the concept of the subject, but merely breaking it up into those constituent concepts that have all along been thought in it... (Kant, 1781, Introduction, section 4, p. 48)

In a similar spirit, Hume thinks that primitive concepts must be independent; presumably that's because he too thinks that conceptual entailment comes from, and only from, the analysis of complex concepts.<sup>12</sup> The moral is pretty much the one we drew above: there's an historical connection between the idea that there are analytic truths at all and the idea that analyticities arise from structural relations between complex concepts and their parts. But to hold that sort of view is to acknowledge the possibility of synonymy between concepts both of which are primitive; hence, of synonymy without analyticity.

For all that, philosophers have occasionally denied that analyticities derive from conceptual analyses. Carnap (1952), for example, suggests that a concept may enter into analytic inferences even where it doesn't have constituents (in effect, even if the concept doesn't have a definition). So, for example, this account would allow 'Whatever is red is colored' to be analytic even though 'red' doesn't mean *colored and X*. In such cases, the principles invoked are called 'meaning postulates.' But there's a good (essentially Quinean) reason why this sort of proposal never became popular; namely, that it's unclear what the truth maker for a meaning postulate could be. Consider the contrast between 'red → colored' and 'bachelor → unmarried.' Someone who thinks the latter is analytic can offer an explanation of its being so; *viz.*, that it follows from the conceptual structure of BACHELOR. To be sure, this explanation requires support from arguments that the concept BACHELOR *is* complex; but at least *if* BACHELOR is complex, one can see

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<sup>12</sup> "Every quality being a distinct thing from another, may be conceiv'd to exist apart, and may exist apart from every other quality..." (Hume, (1739/1969), Book I, part 4, section 3, p. 271)

why 'bachelor → unmarried' might be analytic. What, however, is the corresponding story about 'red → colored'? Clearly not that it follows from the decomposition of 'red'. But if not that, then what? If you can't answer this question, then the claim that 'red → colored' is a meaning postulate *just is* the claim that 'red → colored' is analytic (see Quine 1953); so what looked like an explanation of the analyticity turns out to be just a truism.

We're inclined to take this sort of point very seriously, so we pause to rub it in. We saw, earlier in the paper, that Boghossian doesn't wish to claim that stipulations, implicit definitions, conventions or the like could be what make analyticities true. We're sympathetic with his not wishing to claim this since, even if stipulation could make *sentences* true, it seems quite hopeless as an account of the truth of analytic *thoughts*. Presumably nobody stipulated the connection between the concept BACHELOR and the concept UNMARRIED MAN; nor is it easy to see how such conceptual relations could hold by linguistic convention. As we read him, Boghossian leaves questions about the truth-makers for analyticities moot; which, as we remarked, he surely has every right to do. On the other hand, such questions do have to be faced sooner or later, and the options seem a bit sparse. *De facto*, as far as we can tell, they're down to one. If you follow the Kantian tradition, it's constituency relations among concepts that make analyticities true. Bachelors have to be unmarried because the concept UNMARRIED is part of the concept BACHELOR. If, however, you don't follow the Kantian line, then you have much the same problem that Carnap did. It's all very well to *say* that some or other P is analytic; but such claims aren't convincing lacking an account of what it is that makes them so. If, as we suppose, Kant's story is the only one on offer, then it seems to us that a philosopher who insists on there being analytic truths, would be wise to sign up for conceptual containment at his earliest possible convenience.

We've been reviewing reasons why it's not wise to conflate synonymy with analyticity. Our third point is sort of semantical. It's supposed to be a mark of analytic inferences that they are valid in opaque contexts. The argument is that, for example, the inference from '...thinks John is a bachelor' to '...thinks John is an unmarried man' goes through because, since BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN are the same concept, you can't think the one without *thereby* thinking the other. This argument wouldn't, of

course, be available on the assumption that BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN are distinct concepts; no more than the synonymy of ‘bachelor’ and ‘unmarried man’ entails that you can’t *say* the one without thereby saying the other. Hence the general consensus that identity of content isn’t *per se* sufficient for substitutivity; you need something more (like, maybe, that the concepts involved are identical or maybe that they are ‘structurally isomorphic’). So the standard way of explaining why substitutivity co-varies with analyticity depends on assuming that only conceptual identity yields analyticity; mere conceptual synonymy isn’t good enough. To be sure, we’re taking for granted that concepts that are structurally distinct (e.g., BACHELOR and UNMARRIED MAN, according to the story about them we prefer) can nevertheless be the same in content. We think this is pretty untendentious given that concepts are supposed to have structure at all. If concepts have structure and content, then why shouldn’t two concepts with the same content have different structures?

To sum up: For good and sufficient reasons, analyticity is traditionally connected with concept *identity*; the latter is viewed as both necessary and sufficient for the former. If that’s right, you can’t hold that *synonymy* is sufficient for analyticity unless you’re prepared to claim that *content*-identical concepts are identical *tout court*. But, just as Frege taught us not to identify concepts with their extensions (because there are different ways in which an *extension* may be ‘grasped’), it is likewise plausible that you can’t identify a concept with its *content* (because there are different ways in which a *content* can be grasped; i.e., identical contents can be grasped *via* structurally distinct modes of presentation.) *Prima facie*, you can think the content *unmarried-manhood* either *via* the concept BACHELOR or *via* the concept UNMARRIED MAN; and, as we’ve seen, all sorts of (broadly psychological) questions about concept possession, concept acquisition, and so on, turn on which of these ways you do think it; that’s because it’s the structure of a concept that determines the psychological consequences of entertaining it (at least it is according to computational accounts of psychological processes). The price you pay for not allowing merely structural differences to distinguish between concepts is that you thereby abstract concepts from their psychological roles.

There is, to repeat the point one last time, a serious question whether analyticity follows from synonymy (*viz.*, from what we all agree that Meaning Realism entails).

Boghossian's argument that Meaning Realists have to accept analyticity begs this serious question.

Perhaps, however, you don't find the arguments we've offered convincing; maybe, you think that there must, after all, be *some* way of getting to analyticity from identity of 'meaning properties'; viz., from synonymy. So be it. We claim only that the inference won't go through without considerable elaboration of its premises; and that, for all anybody knows, some of the premises that the elaboration requires may not be true. If we've convinced you of that much, then, *prima facie* at least, there's no reason why you can't affirm Meaning Realism and still deny *a/s*.

But suppose you're *still* not convinced. Suppose you say: 'Look, guys, analyticity just is truth in virtue of meaning. If you allow synonymy (and logic), then *of course* you allow analyticity; and, by stipulation, Meaning Realists do allow synonymy. So, isn't this stuff about making analyticity contingent on concept identity much ado about nothing?'<sup>13</sup> Answer, 'no'. Not, at least, if you want analyticity to explain apriority in the usual Kantian way; viz., that when 'F → G' is analytic, thinking G is part of thinking F.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Kantian treatment, what makes a predication *a priori* is a certain relation between states of mind; viz., that a mind that thinks the subject thereby thinks the predicate. But this line of explanation requires more than that that 'F → G' is true in virtue of meaning; it requires also that the concept that 'G' expresses is part of the concept that 'F' expresses. You can, if you like, just hold that meaning identity engenders apriority, punkt; but, we claim, you need the stuff about identity conditions on states of mind to explain *why* meaning identity engenders apriority; and, to repeat, the stuff about states of mind assumes that some concepts are constituents of others. Why should meaning identity entail apriority if the concepts involved *aren't* structurally related?<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This line of thought ignores the Harman objection, which is, in effect, that meaning alone *couldn't* determine truth, since what a symbol means is among its intrinsic properties, whereas truth depends on how the world is. (See above).

<sup>14</sup> This doesn't, of course, include (putative) analyticities that depend on indexicals, like 'I am here now'. (See Kaplan.) We care about cases where philosophers say things like 'you can't have knowledge without belief because *believes P is part of the meaning* (our emphasis) of 'knows P'.' We think this claim is paradigmatic of the way that appeals to analyticity are typically exploited in philosophical arguments; and we take seriously its *prima facie* implication that (some) meanings have parts.

<sup>15</sup> As far as we can make out, Boghossian thinks it's because the meaning facts about a language are *ipso facto* "transparent" to its speakers; so in particular, if F and G are synonymous (i.e., if the same meaning facts are true of them), then speakers would *ipso facto* know that they are synonymous. However, this claim is highly tendentious, and (as usual), that is all we require for present purposes.

## 2. Logical Truths

Like many others, Boghossian makes the point that CR semantics is plausibly viewed as a generalization of one of the standard ways of treating the logical particles (Dummett 1977). The idea is that primitive logical terms can be given a role in a language(/theory) by specifying rules of introduction and elimination. Thus, the meaning of ‘and’ (as it is used in formalizations of propositional logic) is determined (at least up to logical equivalence) by specifying that the substitution instances of the following inference schema are valid:

‘and’ introduction:  $P, Q \therefore P \text{ and } Q$   
‘and’ elimination:  $P \text{ and } Q \therefore P, Q$

Insofar as this sort of thing strikes you as a promising account of the meanings of the logical vocabulary, a parallel treatment of the rest of the lexicon might seem promising too. Some such idea is frequently cited as grounds for optimism about CR (Sellars 1954, Harman, 1986, 1987, Peacocke 1992). On this view, the job of the lexicon of a language is to specify valid introduction (‘entrance’) and elimination (‘exit’) rules for *all* of its primitive expressions.

We think it’s a *prima facie* objection to this project that ‘and’ and (as it might be) ‘tree’ seem to be such different *kinds* of words that it would be sort of surprising if their meanings were constituted in essentially the same way. (For one thing, it’s plausible that ‘and’ doesn’t refer to anything; but ‘tree’ clearly does.<sup>16</sup>) Given the *prima facie* magnitude of such differences, it seems CR semantics might do well enough for the logical expressions but not work at all for non-logical primitives. One of the present authors (JF) has flirted with this sort of hybrid theory, and continues to find it attractive on alternate Tuesdays.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Even theorists who think of CR semantics as a generalization of the semantics of logical particles generally think that there’s more to the meaning of ‘tree’ than its role in inference. There’s also something that reconstructs notions like denotation; perhaps it’s something epistemological like a procedure for recognizing things that fall in the term’s extension. (See, for example, Peacocke 1992). Off hand, the only philosopher we can think of who approximates endorsing a *pure* CR semantics for the whole lexicon is Brandom; see his (2000). However, a fair number of linguists seem to harbor some such view too, usually in conjunction with a profound distrust of reference, truth, and the external world. Cf., Chomsky 2000, *etc.*).

<sup>17</sup> He wishes to point out, however, that to hold that the meaning of a logical constant is constituted by its conceptual roles is *not* the same as holding that they are ‘introduced’ by implicit definitions. It is also not the same as holding that to formulate the entrance/exit rules for such an expression, is *ipso facto* a formulation of its possession conditions (see Fodor, forthcoming).

We don't propose to defend the viability of a CR treatment of the logical constants. But we do want to consider a charge that Boghossian levels; namely, that a Meaning Realist who adopts a CR semantics for the logical constants, can't reasonably deny that conceptual roles might likewise determine the meanings of nonlogical terms. As far as we can see, however, his argument for claiming this is unconvincing.

Here's what he says:

...if the only view available about how the logical constants acquire their meaning is in terms of the inferences and/or sentences that they participate in, then any indeterminacy in what those meaning-constituting sentences and inferences are will translate into an indeterminacy about the meanings of the expressions themselves. This realization should give pause to any philosopher who thinks he can buy in on Quine's critique of implicit definition without following him all the way to the rejection to the headier doctrine of meaning-indeterminacy. ...Fodor seems a particularly puzzling case; for he holds all three of the following views. (1) he rejects indeterminacy... (2) he follows Quine in rejecting a notion of meaning-constituting inference. (3) he holds a conceptual role view of the meanings of the logical constants. As far as I am able to judge, however, this combination of views is not consistent. (Boghossian 1997, pp. 354-5)

Now, we agree that you can't coherently endorse {CR, MR, and no a/s} while denying indeterminacy; for MS and CR jointly imply that some part of a concept's inferential role is meaning constitutive, but (*sans a/s*) it's indeterminate which part that is. But so what? In particular, why shouldn't indeterminacy and MR be compatible? Boghossian must think that if the meaning of an expression is indeterminate, it follows that there is no fact of the matter about what the expression means. Thus:

...if there is no fact of the matter as to which of the various inferences involving a [logical] constant are meaning-constitutive, then there is also no fact of the matter as to what the logical constants themselves mean. (Boghossian 1997, p. 354)

We're not prepared to concede anything of this sort. We think all sorts of indeterminacy can infect an expression which is, nevertheless, perfectly meaningful. Vagueness is a classic case; there are approximately indefinitely many shades of color that are neither determinately red nor determinately not red. Name one of these shades 'F'. This means that the inference from 'is F' to 'is red' is indeterminate; and, presumably, if some of the inferences that turn on a predicate are indeterminate, then the meaning of the predicate must be indeterminate too. But it doesn't follow that the predicate *has* no meaning; 'red' isn't meaningless; 'red' means *red*.

We don't, of course, claim that if the connectives are indeterminate, that's because they're vague. Our point is just that the inference from indeterminacy to irrealism isn't valid in the general case. As a matter of fact, though we're pretty sure that 'and' has a meaning, we also think that there are several respects in which its meaning (and *mutatis mutandis* that of the other logic constants) is indeterminate; just as you would expect if, on the one hand, the semantics of the logical particles is CR and, on the other hand, that there is no *a/s* distinction. So, our diagnosis is that Boghossian is trying to run a *reductio ad absurdum* of which the conclusion is true.

Here are three respects in which, according to views that are often endorsed in the literature, the meanings of the logical constants are indeterminate. Our point is that, whether or not these views are true, none of them would seem to be incompatible with the logical constants having meanings.

- i. It's unclear, perhaps in principle, which words *are* logical constants. Are, for example, 'temporally prior to', 'ought' and 'possible' among them? This is a way of asking whether tense logic, deontic logic, and modal logic really are species of logic. If they are, then (according to the hybrid theory) 'ought', 'possible' and 'temporally prior to' have CR semantics; if not, then not.

Well, suppose there's no definite fact of the matter about which expressions are logical constants (i.e., that it's *indeterminate* which expressions are logical constants) hence that there are expressions for which the viability of CR semantics is also indeterminate. We doubt that anything like Meaning *Irrealism* would follow. Even if there's no fact about *which* words are logical constants, it may be true that *some* words are, and that CR semantics is true of them.

- ii. There are certain well-known indeterminacies about what some of the logical expressions mean. Is English 'not' Classical or is it Intuitionistic? Does English 'if/then' express the material conditional? Is the correct interpretation of English quantifiers (like 'some') objectual or substitutional? Does 'all' have existential import? And

so forth. Perhaps some of these questions will turn out to be resolvable on empirical (or other) grounds. But, surely, whether the connectives are meaningful doesn't depend on their doing so.

- iii. There are indefinitely many ways of formulating introduction and elimination rules for, as it might be, 'and'. How, then, do you choose the ones that generate analyticities; i.e., the ones that are true in virtue of the *meaning* of 'and'? Suppose (as Boghossian is inclined to do) that there's no matter of fact here. Then, presumably, it follows that the possession conditions for AND are indeterminate. But it surely doesn't follow from *that* that the *identity* conditions for AND are indeterminate (or, still less) that there are *no* identity conditions for AND.) Notice that the satisfaction of a possession condition for a concept C is, *ipso facto*, *sufficient* for having C. This is so even if, by assumption, it's indeterminate which of the (logically equivalent) formulations of the possession conditions for having C is the one that determines its meaning. But, surely, you can't *have* the concept C unless there *is* the concept C.

Since these sorts of points are all pretty familiar, we're worried that maybe we've misunderstood what Boghossian means by 'indeterminacy'. Perhaps he wants 'indeterminacy' to mean whatever it does in Chapter 2 of *Word and Object*; that, presumably, would be indeterminacy of translation.

In Chapter 2 of *Word and Object* Quine argued that, for any language, it is possible to find two incompatible translation manuals that nevertheless perfectly conform to the totality of the evidence that constrains translation. This is the famous doctrine of the indeterminacy of translation. Since Quine was, furthermore, prepared to assume that there could not be facts about meaning that are not captured in the constraints on best translation, he concluded that meaning-facts themselves are indeterminate... This is the doctrine that I have called the indeterminacy of meaning. (Boghossian 1997, p. 333)

Actually, we don't know of any place in Quine where he speaks of indeterminacy of *meaning*; though, of course, talk about indeterminacy of translation is ubiquitous. But suppose that the translation of the logical particles is indeterminate and that indeterminacy of meaning follows from indeterminacy of translation. To get Meaning

Irrealism you need the further premise that *indeterminacy* of meaning entails *no meaning facts*; and, we're claiming, it's quite unclear whether that's true. There are lots of kinds of meaning indeterminacy, and nobody knows which, if any of them, precludes MR.<sup>18</sup>

### *Conclusion*

As we understand him, Boghossian claims (i) that a consistent Meaning Realist must admit that the *a/s* distinction is viable; (ii) that meaning indeterminacy is incompatible with Meaning Realism; (iii) that you can't be a CR theorist about words like 'and' unless you are also a CR theorist about words like 'tree'; and (iv) that you can't hold that implicit definitions determine meanings without also holding that there are analytic truths. Boghossian also thinks (v) that you can't be a CR theorist about words like 'and' unless you tolerate the meaning indeterminacy of some of the expressions that contain them. But he's wrong about (i)-(iv) and, though he's right about (v), it's plausible that expressions containing the logical terms *are* meaning indeterminate in several different respects, just as you would expect if their meanings supervene on their conceptual roles. That's independent of whether MR holds for the logical terms, at least for anything that has been argued so far.

So, as far as we can see, everything is fine: you can hold *MR* and *no a/s* and you can hold *CR for logical constants* but not for 'tree'. Or, anyhow, you can lacking premises that Boghossian hasn't supplied and that Meaning Realists may coherently refuse to grant. So, where does this leave us vis-à-vis the question whether there could be a principled *a/s* distinction? Well, if it's assumed (*contra* Quine) that there is such a thing as identity of meaning facts (hence, of conceptual content) *and* it's assumed that syntactically simple expressions (e.g., 'bachelor') sometimes express complex concepts (e.g., UNMARRIED MAN),<sup>19</sup> then some sentences (e.g., 'Bachelors are unmarried') are indeed analytic. Our point against Boghossian has been that though a Meaning Realist must accept the first assumption, he is quite free to reject the second. So, once again, analyticity doesn't follow from Meaning Realism alone.

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<sup>18</sup> Harman (1999, 149-150) has likewise suggested that Boghossian's arguments may depend on conflating various sense of 'indeterminacy'.

<sup>19</sup> The standard formulation of this second assumption is that many words have definitions. We very much doubt that's true. See Fodor and Lepore (2002).

## *Addendum*

And so, in the course of events, we have gone from place to place, reading the aforesaid to such as were prepared to listen.<sup>20</sup> Such is the custom of our tribe. We find, in the course of doing so, that the following objection is often raised: 'But, surely, one could just *stipulate* that 'bachelor' means *unmarried man*. Wouldn't it *then* follow that 'Bachelors are unmarried men' is analytic? And (given logic) that 'Bachelors are unmarried' and 'Bachelors are men' are analytic too?'

To which we make the following three replies.

- (*Ad hominum*). Maybe so; but Boghossian explicitly rejects this possibility, and it's Boghossian whom we're arguing with.

- (*As per* above). We can't see how the stipulation story could apply to relations among *concepts*; not even if it's supposed to apply to relations among words.

- (The important one). Suppose, however, you *can* stipulate that two concepts have the same content. It doesn't follow that you can stipulate they have the same *structure* or, *a fortiori*, that they have the same *constituent* structure. What would it mean to claim that UNMARRIED is a constituent of BACHELOR *by stipulation* (or, *mutatis mutandis*, that, by stipulation, 'unmarried' is *not* a constituent of 'unmarried man')? But, according to the mainline philosophical tradition, analyticity requires concept identity; *a fortiori*, it requires identity of conceptual structure. If that's right, then what analyticity requires isn't a thing that you *can* stipulate.

'So much the worse for the mainline philosophical tradition,' you may wish to say. Ok; but, (to repeat) as far as we know, it's the only theory there is that offers even a remotely plausible account of *what makes* a proposition analytic; i.e., about what the truth-makers for analyticity claims could be. And it's likewise what links, on the one hand, analyticity with modality and, on the other hand, analyticity with psychology. Give up the connection with the constituent structure of concepts, and what's left of the thesis that there are consequential analytic truths is that there are philosophically interesting we-know-not-whats. The track record of such claims isn't encouraging.

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