

## Philosophical Analysis

To clarify or address a philosophical problem sometimes it is necessary to give an "analysis" of some word or concept. This is a special kind of definition.

A *stipulative definition* of a word is an *announcement* as to how one plans to use that word.

There are no *wrong* stipulative definitions—only misleading ones. On the other hand...

An *analysis* of a word (or concept) is an attempt to clarify aspects of how it is *already* used.

When a philosopher asks questions like "what is *free will*?", "what is it to *have knowledge*?", "what is it to be *alive*?" they're generally seeking *analyses*. Here there are right and wrong answers.

To supply an analysis you need to specify conditions with two key properties. Distinguish:

A is a *necessary condition* for B if whenever B is the case A must be as well.

A is a *sufficient condition* for B if whenever A is the case B must be as well.

Having 120 credits is a necessary but *not* sufficient condition for graduating from Pitt (you need to do other things too).

Being elected by unanimous vote in the presidential election is a sufficient but *not* necessary condition for becoming President of the United States (you could do it with far fewer votes).

An analysis requires giving *both* necessary and sufficient conditions for a concept or word. Here's a classic attempted analysis of what it is to be a bachelor:

X is a bachelor = X is an unmarried male.

Usually analyses of philosophical concepts are pretty tough to give. And in general a proposed analysis of "A" into "B" may have *counterexamples*—scenarios which show something is an A without being a B or vice versa. For example,

Is it really true that being a bachelor is just being an unmarried male? What about the pope? The pope is not a bachelor, but he is definitely an unmarried male. So being an unmarried male might be *necessary* to be a bachelor, but it's definitely not *sufficient*—it seems more is required.

## Hume on Liberty and Necessity

Some important reflections and claims of Hume:

- (A) A strong kind of causal regularity in human actions is presupposed by our everyday interactions. So many people *assume* (or act as if they assume) that certain clearly free actions are effectively determined.

Consider how you expect a shop keeper to react when you go to the store to buy a pack of gum. Hume notes that sometimes the kind of regularity we see in human action is just as strong as physical causal regularity. He dramatizes this with his example of the prisoner and guard. A second point:

- (B) A limited, though important, sense of "freedom" is compatible with this regularity.

"By liberty...we can only mean a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will; that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to everyone who is not a prisoner."

If "freedom" just means "being caused by our characters/dispositions/desires" it would seem there's no problem being free in a deterministic world. Finally:

- (C) This regularity can explain the rationality of punishment and reactive attitudes (blame, reward, etc.).

"Actions are, by their very nature temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some *cause* in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour, if good; nor infamy, if evil..."

## (Classical) Compatibilism

***compatibilism***: the view that determinism and free will are compatible. (Even if all laws of the universe were deterministic so the future was determined by the past, we could still be free).

Compatibilists think a favored sense of "free" on which determinism does *not* entail that there is only one thing we can do, or that we can't be "free". Here's a standard compatibilist analysis for "acting freely" based on what Hume says at (B) above:

You do X freely if and only if

- (a) you do X,
- (b) X is what you want/choose to do, and
- (c) **if you had wanted/chosen to do something other than X you would have done it.**

Condition (c) is a crucial part of what is known as ***classical compatibilism***. (c) explains the sense in which when we are free we "*could have done otherwise*" even if determinism were true.