

## The analytic, the a priori, and the synthetic

nothing is both red and green all over at one time –  
self-evident,  
non-analytic (?) &  
a priori (?)

two kinds of objections

to the idea that the proposition that ‘nothing is red and green all over at once’ is self-evident and necessary, yet not analytic.

- (1) the proposition is empirical and contingent
- (2) it is analytic after all.

**the contingency objection:** One might think that there could be a **scientific explanation** of why nothing is red and green all over at once; and if there is, then (on a plausible and standard view of such matters) the proposition is empirical and not self-evident or even necessary.

CO: *red* things vs concept of *redness*

If our experimental subject is *selected* by its having a specified property, we cannot find out experimentally that *it* lacks that property.

The analytic truths of reason are simply different: they are not of the right kind to be open to scientific verification or falsification, and in part for this reason they also do not compete with scientific truths.

being non-green is not analyzable out of the concept of being red, whereas being female is analyzable out of the concept of being a vixen.

**the second objection:** The objection proceeds by arguing (against the classical view) that the proposition that nothing is red and green all over at once is analytic.

Could one *directly* analyze the concept of being red as equivalent to the concept of having a color *other than* green and blue and yellow, and so on, in which we list all the remaining colors? Yes? Or, no?

This claim may seem right, because it seems self-evidently true that red is the only color filling that bill.

CO: 1. open-ended class vs close-ended class

2. To be red is to have *that color*; to be red is not simply to be a color other than green, blue, yellow, etc.

3. paradigmatic disanalogy of the analytic: whereas one could not have the concept of a vixen without having the concepts of a fox and a female, one could have the concept of being red (and so understand that concept) without even having all of these other color concepts (even if one must have *some* other color concept).

4. an analysis does not merely provide a *conceptual* equivalent.

An analysis of a concept must meet at least two further conditions.

First, it must exhibit a suitable subset of the elements that constitute the concept;

second, it must do so in such a way that one's seeing that they constitute it can yield some significant degree of *understanding* of the concept.

The concept of being red is surely not constituted by the complex and mainly negative property of being a color that is not green, not blue, and so on; and one could not understand what it *is* for something to be red simply in terms of understanding that long and perhaps indefinite list.

**Understanding of and understanding that:** The relevant notion of understanding is *understanding of*, not *understanding that*.

Understanding *of* has an intimate connection with explanation.

The implication of this point here is that an analysis of a concept must provide sufficient understanding of it to provide at least some *explanation* of it.

The analysis of the concept of a vixen as a female fox provides material for an elementary explanation of that concept; but noting that being red is equivalent to being non-green, nonblue, and so on for all the other colors would not provide any explanation of what it is to be red.

The concept of being red is simply not thus analyzable, i.e., the property of being red is not identical with that negative property.

Indeed, one could presumably understand the list of other colors quite well even if one had never seen or imagined redness, and one had *no* perceptual, imaginational, or other concept of redness.

One's understanding of the concept does not require its analyzability; it is enough to be able (above all) to apply it to the right things, withhold it from the wrong ones, and see what follows from its application—such as the thing's not being green.

It appears that the proposition that nothing is red and green all over at once is not analytic. This does not, however, prevent our rationally grasping the truth of that proposition.

Truths that meet this rational graspability condition—roughly a knowability through conceptual understanding condition— have been called *a priori propositions* (propositions knowable ‘from the first’)

Propositions that are a priori in this strict, knowability sense—as is the proposition that nothing is red and green all over at once—are also plausibly considered self-evident.

Moreover, the kind of justification for believing a selfevident proposition when we believe it in the indicated way is a basic kind of justification and is often called a *priori*.

By contrast with analytic propositions, however, the kind of a priori proposition exemplified by that one seems to assert something beyond what analysis of the relevant concepts can show. For this reason, propositions of this kind are also called *synthetic propositions*, though these are typically defined negatively, simply as *non-analytic*.

**how they are true** (analytic) & **how they are known** (a priori): It is noteworthy that although analytic propositions are characterized roughly in terms of how they are true—by virtue of conceptual containment (or, on a related account, on pain of contradiction)—a priori propositions are characterized in terms of *how they are known*, or can be known: through the operation of reason.

the a priori statements can *also* be known through experience (?).

say through receiving testimony, at least if the attester’s knowledge is, directly or indirectly, grounded in the operation of reason.

But even if this negative characterization of a priori propositions is correct so far as it goes, understanding them through it will require understanding of the kinds of positive characteristics I am stressing. Let us pursue these.

[6. *What are two kinds of objections to the idea that the proposition ‘nothing is red and green all over at once’ - is self-evident and necessary, yet not analytic? Briefly discuss.* ‘কোনো কিছু একইসাথে ও পুরোপুরিভাবে লাল ও সবুজ নয়’ – এই বচনটি সেলফ-এভিডেন্ট ও আবশ্যিক হলেও বিশ্লেষক নয়, এই ধারণার ব্যাপারে দুটি আপত্তি কী? সংক্ষেপে আলোচনা করো।]

[7. *What is the relevance of ‘understanding of’ and ‘understanding that’ in the discussion of the analytic, a priori and synthetic statement? বিশ্লেষক, অভিজ্ঞতা-পূর্ব ও সংশ্লেষক বচনের অন্তঃসম্পর্ক আলোচনায় ‘understanding of’ ও ‘understanding that’ এর প্রাসঙ্গিকতা কী?*