

Hughes's own explicit intentions, her account of aesthetic reflection supports not so much the picture of a mutual cooperation between the faculties, but a far more authoritarian model – that of the imagination's hegemony.

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, Hughes's book remains an important contribution to the field. Particularly valuable is Hughes's insight that aesthetic experience not only reveals the subjective conditions for cognition, but also points towards the cognitive suitability of empirical objects themselves. The claim that a beautiful object somehow exemplifies the fit between mind and world captures a crucial aspect of Kant's aesthetic theory, namely, the much overlooked view that aesthetic experience, despite its non-cognitive status, supports our cognitive efforts. In drawing attention to this view, Hughes's book will hopefully stimulate a renewed discussion of the import aesthetics makes to Kant's epistemology.

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Notes

- ¹ Fiona Hughes, *Kant's Aesthetic Epistemology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 116–21.
- ² Hughes, pp. 132–47.
- ³ Hughes, ch. 5, pp. 169–206.
- ⁴ Hughes, ch. 7, pp. 248–310.
- ⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B 161, p. 262.
- ⁶ Hughes, p. 143.
- ⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Ak 5: 287, p. 167.

Truth in Virtue of Meaning: A Defence of the Analytic-Synthetic Distinction,
by G. Russell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, xv + 232 pp.

In *Truth in Virtue of Meaning*, Gillian Russell re-examines, re-evaluates, re-interprets, and then re-defends the analytic-synthetic distinction. Her rationale for doing so is threefold (pp. 2-3). First, she is dissatisfied with the current state of the controversy concerning the analytic-synthetic distinction, and wants to see whether some progress can be made. Second, given her acceptance of Kripke's sharp distinction between semantic necessity – i.e. metaphysical necessity, or truth in every possible world – and apriority – i.e. epistemic necessity, or belief that is justified independently of experience – she wants to see whether the concept of analyticity, understood as 'truth in virtue of meaning', can be used to explicate the nature of semantic/metaphysical necessity or not (as it ultimately turns out – *not*). Third, since it follows from her acceptance of Kripke's sharp distinction between semantic/metaphysical necessity and apriority that our knowledge of necessary truth can be a posteriori (and correspondingly, that our a priori knowledge can be contingent), then she wants to investigate whether

there is a special kind of knowledge that attaches to justified beliefs in sentences that are true in virtue of meaning, or analytic. In view of those reasons, the book is divided into three parts:

- Part I: 'The positive view', which comprises chapters 1-3, and an appendix that presents a formalization of her theory of analyticity;
- Part II: 'A defense', which comprises chapters 4-6;
- Part III: 'Work for epistemologists', which comprises chapter 7.

Russell's argument begins with two basic premises. The first basic premise is that post-Quinean work in semantics and philosophical logic by Kripke, Putnam, Evans, Kaplan, Burge, Donnellan and others – and in particular, direct reference semantics (including the Kripkean causal-historical theory of reference for proper names, the Kripke/Putnam scientific essentialist and rigid designator semantics for natural kind terms, and the Kaplan/Evans contextualist/demonstration act semantics for indexicals) and semantic externalism – has shown us that there are at least four different types of *meaning*:

- **character**: the thing speakers must know (perhaps tacitly) to count as understand an expression
- **content**: what the word contributes to what a sentence containing it says (the proposition it expresses)
- **reference determiner**: a condition which an object must meet in order to be the referent of, or fall in the extension of, an expression
- **referent/extension**: the (set of) objects to which the term applies. (pp. 45-6)

For Russell, **character** is either the rule of use of an expression or the 'mode of presentation' (Frege's *Art des Gegebenseins*) of a content, reference determiner or referent/extension. **Content** is either a truth-bearing object of propositional attitudes expressed by the use of sentences, i.e. a proposition, or else a part of a proposition.

Reference determiner is what fixes the referent or extension of an expression, where this can include functions from speech-contexts to contents (Kaplan's *variable* characters), functions from the actual world or possible worlds to referents/extensions (Kaplan's *constant* characters, aka 'semantic values'), and functions from truth-values to truth-values (aka 'truth-functions'). And finally, **referent/extension** is what proper names, indexicals and other directly referential terms stand for, what satisfies predicates, and what makes sentences true or false.

It is illuminating briefly to compare and contrast Russell's finegrained classification of types of meaning with Frege's and Bertrand Russell's more roughgrained semantic typologies. What Frege called *Sinn* or 'sense' ambiguously and problematically covered the three notions of **character**, **content**, and **reference determiner**, and what he called *Bedeutung* or 'reference' ambiguously and problematically covered the notions of **referent/extension**, speech context (of use, of utterance, and of the act of introducing the meaning of a term by ostension), and world (both actual and possible). Bertrand Russell on the other

hand rather problematically made **character** purely psychological (whether as ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ or ‘knowledge by description’), and then even more problematically collapsed both **content** and **reference determiner** into **referent/extension**. This collapse is sometimes called ‘referentialist semantics’ or ‘“Fido”-Fido semantics’.

Russell’s (I mean *Gillian Russell*’s) second basic premise is that the thesis that ‘analyticity is truth in virtue of meaning’, which according to the standard Quinean gloss says that a sentence or statement *S* is analytic just in case *S* is *true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact*, should *not* be taken to say that *any* sort of meaning will do, *nor* should it be taken to imply that facts about the actual world cannot play *any* role whatsoever in analyticity. This is because, if the former were the case, then every true sentence or statement whatsoever would also count as true in virtue of meaning, and if the latter were the case, then the *truth* of analytic sentences or statements would be entirely alienated from the actual worldly *truth-makers* of sentences or statements. Instead then, Russell’s thesis is that ‘analyticity is truth in virtue of meaning’ should be taken to say that a certain *type* of meaning *wholly and solely determines truth* for *S*, regardless of any further contributions to *S*’s meaning and truth that can also be made by actual worldly facts.

In chapters 2 and 3, Russell defines analyticity in terms of the type of meaning she has dubbed **reference determiner**. So her considered view is that ‘analyticity is truth in virtue of reference determiner’, which is to say that *analyticity is truth that is solely and wholly determined by reference determiner*. Leaving subtle details and variant formulations (which include modal vs. metaphysical formulations of the notion of analyticity, and a distinction between analyticity and ‘pseudo-analyticity’, which requires existential assumptions and rules out non-referring names) aside, her basic idea is that a sentence *S* is analytic just in case *S* is true in virtue of its reference determiner.

More specifically, however, a sentence *S* is analytic just in case either the reference determiner for *S*’s logical predicate expression (LPE) is *contained in* the reference determiner for *S*’s logical subject expression (LSE), or else the reference determiner of its LPE is *excluded by* the reference determiner of its LSE when the sentence is negatively modified or negated (p. 100). In this way, as Russell points out, she is ‘rehabilitating something like the Kantian account’ (p. 83) of analyticity. Two analytic sentences that clearly and distinctly fit this criterion are:

- A1. Bachelors are unmarried.
- A2. No bachelors are married.

In the case of A1, the set of all actual and possible bachelors is a proper subset of the class of all actual and possible unmarried creatures, the property of bachelorhood is a ‘determinate’ property of the ‘determinable’ property of unmarriedness, and so-on. And in the case of A2, the set of all actual and possible married creatures is excluded by the set of all actual and possible bachelors, the property of marriedness is excluded by the property of bachelorhood, and so-on.

Russell’s account has four basic features. The first is that her definition of analyticity should hold for *all distinct possible conceptions of the specific char-*

acter of reference determiners. The second basic feature of Russell's account is that analyticity is defined for *sentences* and not for propositions (or statements, for that matter). The third basic feature of Russell's account is that her definition of analyticity permits the propositional content of sentences that are analytic to be *contingent and not necessary*. Hence for her there can be *contingent analyticities*. Her leading example of a contingent analyticity is also Kaplan's leading example of a truth of the logic of demonstratives:

A3. I am here now.

In the case of A3, the reference determiner for 'I', which includes the place and time of the context of utterance, also includes the reference determiner for 'here' and 'now'. But it is not true for any competent user of 'I' that she or he *necessarily had to be* at that very place at that very time.

And the fourth basic feature of Russell's account is that it is possible for a sentence to be analytic even though a competent user of the sentence *either accidentally does not or inherently cannot know this a priori*. Hence for her there can be a posteriori analyticities. Her leading example of an a posteriori analyticity is

A4. Mohammed Ali is Cassius Clay. (pp. 82-3, 200)

In the case of A4, the reference determiner for 'Mohammed Ali', which includes the context of introduction for that name, also includes the reference determiner for 'Cassius Clay', since the former name was introduced parasitically on the introduction of the latter name.

These four basic features of analyticity collectively allow Russell to face up to what she takes to be two leading objections to her thesis that analyticity is truth in virtue of reference determiner. The first objection is that not all reference determiners are *meanings*, because some of them fall within the domain of what Kaplan calls 'meta-semantics', e.g. demonstration-acts. Russell responds to this objection by *conceding* that fact, but also pointing out that according to her theory, reference determiners for sentences are not the same as *contents*, which always belong to propositions. More generally, we need to remind ourselves that for her analyticity is defined for sentences, not propositions. And the second objection is that not all sentences that are true in virtue of reference determiner are knowable a priori. Again Russell responds to the objection by *conceding* that fact, but also pointing out that according to her theory, since a priori belief and a priori knowledge always and only take sentential contents or propositions as objects, she need not hold that analytic sentences are knowable a priori.

This leaves one 'serious problem' (p. 66) for her theory, however, namely what to say about the fact that there are necessarily true identity sentences of the form ' $\alpha = \beta$ ', e.g. 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' and 'Cassius Clay is Mohammed Ali'. On Russell's account, as I have already mentioned, 'Mohammed Ali is Cassius Clay' is analytic or true in virtue of reference determiner – although a posteriori – because the context-of-introduction-sensitive reference determiner for 'Cassius Clay' is contained in the context-of-introduction-sensitive reference determiner for 'Mohammed Ali'. What is particularly odd, *prima facie*, is that the logically

equivalent sentence ‘Cassius Clay is Mohammed Ali’ should turn out *not* to be analytic on her theory, because the reference determiner for the former name does not contain the reference determiner for the latter name.

But in any case, the issue about necessarily true identity sentences that are not analytic is merely a specific example of the more general problem that there are non-logical, substantive or synthetic (i.e. informative, world-involving, thing-involving, or essence-based) necessary truths. The general problem is not that there are *non-logical analyticities* per se, since Kant, Frege, Carnap, and all the other classical theorists of analyticity had explicitly conceded this – in Frege’s case, by having a class of analytic truths that are deductively derived from ‘logical definitions’, which in turn are not themselves either general logical laws or logical truths; and in Carnap’s case, by having a class of analytic truths that are deductively derived from non-logical ‘meaning-postulates’ – but rather that if analyticity = semantic/metaphysical necessity, then there must be *substantive or synthetic analyticities*, which seems incoherent, and thereby undermines the very idea of analyticity as truth wholly and solely determined by reference determiner.

Russell’s response to the ‘serious problem’ is to detach analyticity from necessity even more sharply than she has already. She has already conceded that there are contingent analyticities and analytic a posteriori sentences. But her concession here is that there are non-analytic, substantive, or synthetic necessities. So according to her theory of analyticity, not only does analyticity not entail necessity, but also necessity does not entail analyticity.

In part II, Russell responds to fourteen critical arguments against the analytic-synthetic distinction. These critical arguments include:

1. Quine’s circularity argument in ‘Two Dogmas’.
2. Quine’s argument from confirmation holism in ‘Two Dogmas’.
3. Quine’s arguments from the nature of definition in ‘Two Dogmas’.
4. Quine’s logical regress argument in ‘Truth by Convention’ and ‘Carnap and Logical Truth’ (aka ‘the problem of justifying deduction’, or ‘the logocentric predicament’).
5. Quine’s argument from the indeterminacy of translation in *Word and Object*.
6. Non-Quinean arguments from semantic externalism (direct reference theory and the division of linguistic labour).
7. The non-Quinean argument from vagueness.
8. Putnam’s argument from the conceivability and possibility of blue gold and robot cats.

In part III, Russell develops an epistemology of analyticity that begins from the thesis that knowledge of analytic truth is not a priori knowledge. So whatever it is that distinctively justifies our belief in analyticity – that is, whatever it is that distinctively justifies our belief in sentences that are true in virtue of reference determiners – is *not* an a priori justification. Precisely *what* it is, however, is not itself part of Russell’s theory, but instead ‘work for epistemologists’ (p. 191).

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Perhaps the greatest urban legend of contemporary philosophy is the belief that W.V.O. Quine refuted the analytic-synthetic distinction in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' in 1951. This is indeed a mere *legend*, however, for four reasons. First, although perhaps least importantly, Quine's critique of the analytic-synthetic distinction was actually a *cumulative* argument that included at least three other important texts in addition to 'Two Dogmas' – namely, 'Truth by Convention' (1935), *Word and Object* (1960) and 'Carnap and Logical Truth' (1963). Second, and more importantly, Quine's argument in 'Two Dogmas' and elsewhere badly mischaracterized *Kant's theory* of the analytic-synthetic distinction by falsely assimilating it to Frege's and Carnap's theories, and by assuming without argument that the very idea of the synthetic a priori (including the notion of synthetic necessity and also the notion of synthetic a priori knowledge) is unintelligible: so Quine never even attacked Kant's theory, much less refuted it. Third, and also more importantly, as H. P. Grice and P. F. Strawson, Jerrold Katz, and now Gillian Russell have decisively shown, Quine's critical arguments against the Frege-Carnap theory of the analytic-synthetic distinction are demonstrably *unsound*. Fourth, finally, and most importantly of all, even despite Kripke's influential arguments for the existence of necessary a posteriori truths and contingent a priori truths in *Naming and Necessity*, together with the widespread post-Kripkean acceptance of the existence of non-logical, non-conceptual, substantive, or synthetically necessary truths based on essences – necessity that flows from the nature of things – no one has yet explained how *analytic* philosophy can really be possible without adequate (i.e. explicit and defensible) theories of

- (i) conceptual analysis,
- (ii) analyticity,
- (iii) the distinction between (a) logical, conceptual, or analytically necessary truths, and (b) non-logical, non-conceptual, substantive, or synthetically necessary truths,
- (iv) a priori knowledge of logical truths and conceptual truths,

and finally

- (v) a priori knowledge of non-logical, non-conceptual, substantive, or synthetically necessary truths, especially including mathematical truths.

For these reasons, the publication of *Truth in Virtue of Meaning* is deeply important philosophical news for contemporary Kantians and analytic philosophers alike. Nevertheless, at the same time, both contemporary Kantians and analytic philosophers should be seriously concerned about Russell's own positive theory of the analytic-synthetic distinction. Here are seven critical worries about it.

First, her theory strongly detaches analyticity from necessary truth, although a classical motivation for having a theory of analyticity was to explain (at least one basic kind of) necessary truth. This leads to many *prima facie* odd consequences of her theory, such as that the sentence

Bachelors are male and bachelors are unmarried

is *not* analytic, even though it is a conjunction of two sentences each of which *is* analytic on her account, and even though the truth-definition for ‘and’ would seem to be clearly satisfied *in virtue of the meanings* of its two conjuncts. Second, her theory provides no explanation of non-logically, substantively or synthetically necessary truths – although it explicitly accepts their existence as a fact – but instead concentrates exclusively and narrowly on the *analytic* side of the analytic-synthetic distinction. But how can there be an adequate theory of the analytic-synthetic distinction without a theory of *syntheticity*? Third, her theory detaches analyticity from apriority, although another classical motivation for having a theory of analyticity was to explain (one basic kind of) a priori knowledge. Fourth, although her theory retains at least part of the classical deep connection between analyticity and logical truth – all logical truths of classical truth-functional logic are analytic on her account – it has little or nothing to say about the nature and status of logical truths other than truth-functional tautologies, or about the nature and status of logical consequence, logical constants, logical laws, logical inference rules and logic itself, although again this was one of the classical motivations for having a theory of analyticity. More specifically, I do think that what we might collectively dub **logical notions** constitutes a distinct *fifth* type of meaning.

Fifth, her theory gives no account of non-logical, substantive, or synthetic a priori necessity, where this is understood to be a robustly semantic/metaphysical and epistemic notion, and not merely a psychological or pragmatic notion, although Kantians think that solving the problem of the nature of robustly semantically/metaphysically and epistemically necessary synthetic a priori propositions is *the deepest and real reason* for having a theory of the analytic-synthetic distinction. Sixth, her theory gives no account of conceptually determined truth or of the nature of conceptual content, although Kantians think that an adequate theory of analyticity should first and foremost yield a theory of conceptually determined truth and conceptual content that will ultimately tell us about the nature of human understanding (*Verstand*) and theoretical reason (*Vernunft*), which in turn are two of the basic innate cognitive faculties that constitute our rational human animality or personhood.

For me, these six worries collectively add up to a more comprehensive and seventh worry, which is this. According to *all* the classical theories of analyticity, including Kant’s, Frege’s and Carnap’s theories, no matter how much they may otherwise differ, nevertheless it is still the case that

- (i) analyticity generally entails necessity,
- (ii) analyticity generally entails a priori knowability,
- (iii) analyticity specifically entails either logically necessary truth or conceptually necessary truth,

and

- (iv) the properly conducted rational activity of either logical analysis or conceptual analysis entails knowledge of analytic a priori necessary truth.

But *none* of these entailments holds, according to Russell's theory of analyticity. So how many classical criteria of analyticity can be denied, without actually changing the philosophical subject? This makes me worry that in the end Russell's theory of analyticity is only a theory of *schmanalyticity*, not a theory of *analyticity*.

As will be obvious, I think that the critical or negative part of Russell's defence of the analytic-synthetic distinction is largely cogent, but have some serious doubts about the constructive or positive part. Despite my doubts about her positive theory, however, it also cannot be doubted that Russell's *Truth in Virtue of Meaning* is a philosophically significant book. I enjoyed reading it, thinking about it, and talking about it with my graduate students and colleagues. The analytic-synthetic distinction, for better or worse, just *is* the logical, semantic, metaphysical and epistemic foundation of contemporary Kantian philosophy and contemporary analytic philosophy alike; and I like it very much that this deeply important meta-philosophical fact has been re-acknowledged by Russell. *The analytic-synthetic distinction is back in town*, and its return should be explicitly admitted and directly faced up to by anyone who really cares about the fate of either Kantian philosophy or philosophical analysis.

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