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The Logic of Criteria

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seem to me to be clear cases of propositions that are contingent and not necessary, either. They seem to me to be *neither* necessary nor contingent. It may be sufficient for Wittgenstein's philosophical purposes that these and other such propositions should have this indefinite status, though *he* appears to have thought that they had the definite status of necessary propositions. But that is another question that I have no space to discuss in this paper.

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THE LOGIC OF CRITERIA *

1. *Introduction.* Logic is the climbing rope of the philosopher, and as we progress upwards we come to depend on it more. At the moment, it seems to me, there is a weak strand in that rope, an old and troublesome strand, which is holding us up in several important assaults. That strand is the analytic-synthetic distinction. There are strong men among us who believe they can dispense with it altogether; but most of us feel we need it, and we sometimes suspect that the dissenters are leaning on it now and then. It seems to me that the distinction needs supplementation, not abolition. In this paper I shall point out the fields where I believe this particular item of equipment is failing us at a crucial moment, go on to examine *ab initio* a group of concepts whose analysis suggests to me a way of making a local repair to the rope, and finally I shall try to illustrate the effects of this repair in the extremely important and difficult case of mental states. I fear the treatment may be too brief for clarity, though quite long enough to contain errors, and it will contain no substantial criticism of Professor Albritton's valuable paper, because I cannot see that it stands in need of any such criticism.

2. *The Necessity for Reform.* The analytic-synthetic distinction is clearly *relevant* to virtually every problem in philosophy. Thus, attempts to reform it almost amount to proposals for a new logic. I wish to suggest some areas where the distinction is not only relevant, but where our present views about it seem to fail us, and where the situation is in need of reformulation and resynthesis.

In logic itself, the difficulty arises particularly in the attempt to analyze meaning by providing the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of a term, an attempt which auto-

* To be presented as part of a symposium on "Criteria" at the Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, at Columbia University, December 29, 1959.

matically involves the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions since statements of such conditions are themselves analytic. The difficulty is that over the past few decades such conditions have been increasingly hard to find or hard to defend. This has led some logicians to reject them *in toto*. I prefer to conclude, for reasons that follow, that there is a relatively limited area in which such propositions are to be found, and that it is an important task for us to introduce new distinctions and analyses to supplement the old ones and provide a basis for dealing with the greater part of conceptual analysis. This was, I think, the task to which Wittgenstein's criterion-symptom vocabulary was directed. In logic proper, the attempts to give necessary and sufficient condition analyses of families of crucial terms have failed; one thinks of nouns such as 'machine,' 'number,' and 'analogy'; of the context-dependent terms such as 'sense' (as in "This term is used here in a different sense"), 'certain,' and 'description'; of names, definite descriptions, counterfactuals, and many other types of terms. In the philosophy of mathematics, the central concept of proof has turned out to be intransigent under logical analysis, as have those of set and operator. In the field of jurisprudence, we have been shown the inadequacy of any attempt to define the concept of property, or contract, or action, or evidence, by any list of necessary and sufficient conditions. In aesthetics, the linkage between judgments of merit and certain kinds of descriptions is now clearly recognizable as one that is too weak to be called necessary, while too strong to be regarded as a simple matter of fact. In the philosophy of science, the great debate about the relationship between theoretical terms and the so-called observational terms has proved completely intractable under the attempts of those who wish to support the division of all respectable statements into the categories of analytic and synthetic. From the field of ethics, we collect the prime example of the relation between facts and values or *prima facie* duties. In political philosophy, there is the similar relation between social description and the assessment of rights. In the philosophy of religion and elsewhere, there is the linkage of thing-language to person-language; it is easy to multiply examples. My suggestion is that a similar relation is involved in each of these cases, which I shall call the normic relation.

3. *The 'Reactionary' Reply.* Before going on to the details of some of these cases, it is worth discussing the standard response to these examples by staunch defenders of the adequacy of the analytic-synthetic distinction. (Remember that the alternative I am proposing is not anarchy—the total abandonment of the

analytic-synthetic distinction—but an extension of the franchise to other relationships.) It amounts to saying that such words may be used in a fuzzy way by the casual user, but that (a) usually their users can be persuaded on reflection to accept certain necessary and sufficient conditions as analytic and to reject other connections as synthetic, or (b) the fuzzy concept should be replaced by a more precise one, which can be defined in a traditional way. It seems to me that the correct reply to this suggestion is two-fold. First, it begs the question whether all conceptual connections *are* synthetic or analytic either by stuffing the intermediate cases into one of these categories, or, when that fails, by rejecting the concept in favor of one which is susceptible to the supposedly desirable analysis. Second, the only reason for supposing that the traditional analysis is desirable is its simplicity, and we have now reached the point where that, though true, is as weak an argument for the analysis as it is for maintaining Newtonian mechanics. Simplicity is not enough, and it is not incidental that this analysis has never found any support from the scientists whose vocabulary was supposed to be suffering from disregard of it. We have now entered a stage in logic in which we recognize the utility of imprecision, and our task may now be described as providing an anatomy where our predecessors thought only a pathology was required.

4. *The Foundations of a New Position.* It is a commonplace in the history of thought that a conceptual scheme is rarely abandoned because of criticism, however devastating. It is, after all, more sensible to attempt reconstruction of a battered position than to wander around in the open battlefield. But if an alternative defensible position can be provided, abandonment of the first is greatly accelerated. In the present case, it must be recognized that no alternative position of a highly formalized kind can be provided, by the nature of the case. This is not to say that a carefully *formulated* and partially formal account is impossible. We shall here only be able to take one or two steps in the direction of this account, and it is particularly important to stress that the two or three examples we discuss are not claimed to be typical of all the relationships in the various fields that I have mentioned. I hope they will illustrate the similarity, but also warn of the differences that we may expect.

I shall begin with a very simple example. What is the relation between being a lemon and the various properties of a lemon? A sour taste, a yellow or green skin with a waxy texture, being the fruit of a particular tree, an ovoid shape, a certain range of sizes, of hardness, and so on, are all familiar properties of lemons.

Which of them is definitive? Clearly no single one, if by definitive we mean analytically connected with the definiendum. One can perfectly well understand the description of something as a lemon without . . . , where we fill in the gap with any one of these properties—or any of the other ones you might find in the dictionary definitions of this term. Nevertheless, there appears to be a limit to the suggested test for analyticity. One cannot “perfectly well understand” a description of something as a lemon without . . . , where we put in *all* the properties mentioned in the space, supposing for the moment that we can do this. The concept of being a lemon is, after all, not something altogether separate from these properties. Hence it appears that there is at least one, and almost certainly more than one, analytic statement associated with the relationship of the criteria for being a lemon to the being of a lemon. It is the statement “A lemon is either sour, or . . . , or” It is essential that a disjunction of properties be listed if the statement is to be correct. (This is not true if all *predicates* applicable to the term are considered. I take it to be analytic that lemons are physical objects, are not turnips or tongue-twisters, etc. But such predicates alone could not provide us with an analysis of the meaning of the term.) However, there are usually several statements of this family in which we vary the disjunction, slightly, all of which are analytic. For it is the case that more than one of the properties listed is required before we can guarantee something is a lemon, and hence we can form the set of disjunctions each of which omits one of the properties, and all of these will be analytically associated with being a lemon. Moreover, with respect to several of the properties, it is the case that we require more than two of them to apply before we would be prepared to say we had a lemon, and hence we can form a third set of such disjunctions, omitting each of the ‘inadequate’ couples in turn, and these again will be analytically connected with the concept of being a lemon. And so on, for higher orders of dispensability.¹ So it is clear that I am not abandoning the concept of analyticity; in fact, the trouble with the logic of criteria is that there are in one respect too many analytic statements around. Notice that all of these are necessary-condition statements—that is, they express necessary conditions for something to be a lemon.

Now, surely one can dispense with some of the items I have mentioned; surely, for example, it is only a matter of contingent

¹ Of course, there are other, uninteresting, families of statements obtained from any one of those given, by inflating the disjunction with irrelevant properties, such as being a Mozart quartet, or with properties that make the disjunction a tautological property.

fact that lemons are yellow (when ripe). If the proof of this is the possibility that we could find lemons that are not yellow, and not be perturbed over calling them lemons nonetheless, then the answer is of course that such a possibility exists. But it is a mistake to accept this as a proof; the logic of criteria insists on a distinction at this point. I shall use the following terminology. Any property that is connected with another in such a way that it does not make sense to deny its application will be said to be analytically connected with it, as, e.g., brotherhood is connected with siblinghood. A property that does not meet this requirement, but which would have to occur in a thorough explanation of the meaning of a term nonetheless, will be said to be normically connected with it. Other connections will be called synthetic. Properties will be called *criteria* if they are other than synthetically connected to a given property, and *indicators* if they are other than analytically connected.

These distinctions immediately raise the problem of distinguishing normic from synthetic connections. Before going further into this, I want also to mention the problem of finding analytic statements about lemons of the converse kind to those already suggested, i.e., sufficient-condition statements about being a lemon. Can we fill in the gap in any statement of the form "If something is . . . , then it's a lemon" so as to produce an analytic statement? Now it seems obvious that there is at least one such statement, namely the one where we put in *all* the criteria. In fact, we feel confident that there are subsets of the criteria which would also suffice. However, there is one small catch about these claims. How do we know when we have all the criteria?

In answer to the first question, How do we know when we have *a* criterion, about all one can say is that any *generally* relevant consideration for deciding whether something is a lemon is a criterion. One can formulate a more exact notion along this line, but we shall find that it has quite serious limitations. A criterion is either an analytic criterion or a normic criterion: if analytic, it is a logically necessary or sufficient condition; if normic, it meets the requirements (*a*) that it is not an analytic criterion, (*b*) that it is a member of a disjunction which is analytically necessary and minimal in the sense that (*c*) any disjunction formed by dropping one component is not an analytically necessary condition. In answer to the second question, How do we know when we have all the criteria (or even enough for an analytic disjunctive necessary condition), about all one can say is that a proposed list must withstand counterexamples in a way similar to that involved in testing ordinary candidates for analytically necessary conditions in the traditional

logic. The difference lies in the great increase in difficulty due to the combinatorial possibilities of a multiple disjunction. For example, if there are six indicators to be tested for criterionhood, there are seven possibly analytic statements to be considered. But the most severe difficulties apply to our answer to both these questions. If one actually goes about listing criteria for lemonhood or manhood, etc., one soon realizes that the above account is greatly simplified. I shall not give an extensive discussion of the required qualifications here, interesting though they are, but I will indicate three that have a consequence of particular importance for our purposes.

5. *Modifications of the Simple Position.* Apart from any plain errors in the account of the last section which may be due either to my failure to think the matter out clearly or to express my thoughts clearly, there are some important shortcomings over which I have so far glossed.

We have given an exact distinction between a normic criterion and an analytic criterion; what can we say about the distinction between a normic criterion and a synthetic indicator? Frequently, again, they do not apply to the same concepts. Concepts for which there are analytic criteria, and those for which there are no criteria, have synthetic indicators, but it is very difficult with concepts like lemon to propose any indicators which are not normic. For if the property is one characteristic of lemons, it will be a relevant consideration for identifying them and hence a criterion; if not, it's not an indicator at all. But this is not quite true. There are some properties that are not *characteristic* of lemons, but may under special circumstances be indicators; e.g., coming from California if other states temporarily abandon growing them for economic or climatological reasons. Notice the introduction of the term "characteristic"; it is an important part of the logic of criteria.

Now, being a lemon is clearly "no more than" having a certain set of properties; but we would not have a term for that set unless they are naturally distinguishable from the sets of clusters which identify-define other fruits and other objects. On these grounds I have previously referred to such concepts as cluster-concepts.² It is most important to see that for many families of concepts with normic criteria which are *not* cluster-concepts, it is relatively easy to distinguish normic from synthetic indicators. We shall discuss one such example in a moment.

² In "Definitions, Explanations and Theories," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Volume 2. The term was adopted in the discussions of the first year of the Center and I do not recall clearly who originated it.

There are next two difficulties that arise when setting up a disjunctive necessary condition. If one begins with a certain criterion, say being a fruit, then one will go on to generate a set of which the second might be size, and the third color. But if one's first choice had been an inanimate property such as having a certain form, then one's second might have been tasting like unripe plums, and so on. Will the second set of items be the same, i.e., contain all the same members as the first? In general, no, for reasons that are fairly obvious. Nor, more seriously, can this inequality be avoided even when we are dealing with non-minimal sets of criteria, i.e., those containing only criteria, but containing some which are not relevant for *this* set. Nevertheless, the conceptual possibility arises of constructing the set of all criteria, providing we recognize the fact that it will contain some criteria that overlap and others that are not jointly applicable.³ This set can certainly not be shown to be finite in general. However, if we could in fact construct it, it looks as if we would be able to do one trick with it that is of importance. We could surely use it to construct an analytically sufficient condition, after dropping one member of all incompatible combinations from it.⁴ For these are all the properties that could ever count towards something being a lemon. There are two troubles about this. First, one could never complete such a list and/or be sure that one had. Second, almost *any* property could, under some circumstances, count towards something being a lemon, e.g., being red, if we knew that lemons had been sprayed red; this would give us a wholly unsatisfactory sufficient-condition statement. To avoid these difficulties we have suggested that the selection of properties be from those which are *always relevant*. Now, this might be meant as an analytic requirement, or it might not. If the former, the property violates condition (a), above, so it could not be used to identify normic properties. If the latter, it excludes almost every possible criterion. The only solution is again the use of the term "characteristically" (which, incidentally, does not mean "statistically"). Lemons are *characteristically* green when young, and *characteristically* yellow thereafter until they rot, when they are *characteristically* brown with white fungus. These connections are not analytic, because there are circumstances under which they would have to be regarded as false, say because of a genetic drift towards pink lemons. But they are stronger than synthetic, because they are relatively impervious to counter-examples (though not immune, as are the analytic statements). Their immunity is greater than

³ Yellow and green in our example.

⁴ The elimination procedure required is actually more complex than this, but unimportantly so.

that of the statistical statements or those containing terms like "mostly" or "nearly always," because they can be maintained against 90% or 100% exceptions *provided that* an account of these exceptions can be given which shows they are due to special circumstances; e.g., a blight which turns all lemons black would falsify statistical statements about them, but not characteristic statements. It might be replied that this only shows that statistical statements about *long-term* coloration are needed; but one's grounds may be theoretical and not statistical. In fact, characteristic statements—of this kind—are correctly analyzed as a kind of theoretical statement; in the case of cluster-concepts the theory is a theory of natural kinds. Essentially, they are the statements which provide the *framework* of an explanatory theory; they outline the norms from which deviations are explained within the theory, but which are themselves explicable, if at all, only in terms of a different theory. (The First & Third Newtonian Laws of Motion are typical normic statements.) Their difference from synthetic statements is clear from the fact that they jointly encapsulate the meaning of the term to which they refer.

The third consideration which leads us to the use of normic terms such as "characteristically" (or "naturally," "normally," "typically," etc.⁵) is the examination of properties that refer to continuous variables, such as size and mass. It is here especially awkward to construct disjunctions; what value of the mass should one give for a lemon? Clearly a range; but this (*a*) suggests a sharp cut-off which is not realistic as an analysis of the way in which we count mass towards the decision whether something is a lemon, or (*b*) fails to indicate the variations of importance within the permissible range. Again, by using "characteristically," we can insulate the term against the sharp cut-off and indicate weighting throughout a range.

Finally, with the construction of "characteristically" statements, we find ourselves coming nearer to the construction of sufficient-condition statements. Statements of this kind can be found, most obviously by the description of paradigms, but there are two difficulties. First, we are concerned not with a mere description, but only with that part of it which is *necessary* to guarantee applicability of the term, i.e., our description may include too much; second, we still have the problem that we are not infallible at including the features which *are* essential. That is, redundancy and inadequacy plague us here too. The procedure for meeting these difficulties is similar to the procedure for meeting their

⁵ See "Truisms as the Grounds for Historical Explanations," in *Theories of History*, ed. by Gardiner (1959).

counterparts in constructing necessary-condition statements of the kind discussed above. Having selected two (say) properties that seem relevant, and applicable to the paradigm, we then try to imagine something which has these but would not be called an X. If successful, then we try to decide what it is about the paradigm that leads us to call *it* an X, although we refuse the term to the counter-example we have just thought up. Again we see that no single list of criteria will result from each paradigm we start with. Nor can the properties of a valid disjunctive necessary condition be conjoined to provide a valid sufficient-condition statement, nor vice versa (the reasons are obvious).

We conclude that we can often find analytic statements of the kinds

- i. If X, then C_1 or C_2 or
- ii. If C_1 and C_2 and . . . , then X.

even when we cannot find any of the traditional forms

- iii. If X, then C_n .
- iv. If C_m , then X.

We have also noted the crucial importance of statements of the form

- v. If X, then characteristically C.

and if we had more space would go on to consider the peculiar family

- vi. If C_j and C_k . . . , then probably X.

which requires a special analysis of "probably" since neither the statistical (synthetic) nor the axiomatic (analytic) accounts are applicable: we might call it the normic sense of probability, since it is exactly analogous to the normic categorical connections we have discussed. Albritton correctly sees some of the important differences between "probably" and "characteristically."

6. *Criteria of Causal Concepts.* Let us consider the introduction of a term for a new disease. Suppose, to take an example from history, that we discern a certain similarity amongst the symptoms of a subset of the patients in a mental hospital that sets them off from the others, perhaps a kind of paralysis, and that we christen them paretics. Now what is the meaning of the term "paresis"? The simplest suggestion would be that it is shorthand for the cluster of symptoms (syndrome) that we have observed. But in the situation we have described, its logic is more complicated than that. Roughly, we mean the term to refer to *the disease entity which manifests itself in the symptoms S* (S being a cluster concept). This kind of term is very common in

science, and is closely related to terms which are introduced by the process of so-called implicit definition, or definition by postulates. There are good reasons for supposing that the relation between S and the disease entity (call it Y) is neither analytic nor synthetic. It is not analytic because it is perfectly possible that S be present and that there be *no* disease entity present which is related to S in the way that Y is defined as being related; indeed this situation has often arisen. But neither is the connection a plain synthetic one, since its statement is the only meaning rule we have for the term "Y." In these respects it is reminiscent of the normic connections of our earlier examples. However, we cannot conclude from this that the connection is the same as that discussed for cluster-concepts. For example, the proposition, If Y then S, is not analytically true, unlike its counterpart. We have just seen that the same is the case with, If S then Y, unlike *its* counterpart. Neither is, If Y then characteristically S, analytic, though a case can be made for, If Y then sometimes S. The logic of such concepts as Y is extremely involved, even at the stage when they are only connected with S; and within a short space after their introduction they are, if successful, connected with other indicators besides S, via laws, some of which become criteria. This is one way that theories are constructed. I have elsewhere said something about such concepts as examples of conditional definitions, and here I want only to say that they seem to provide another good example of the proper use of the term "criterion," despite the differences from the cluster concepts.

In the history of medicine, it was discovered that paresis was a form of tertiary syphilis, due to the passage of spirochetes up the fluid of the spinal column to the brain where their effects were first manifest between 3 and 30 years after the primary infection and sometimes almost as long after the disappearance of all primary and secondary symptoms. An operationalist might suggest that the term "paresis" has now come to refer to the presence of spirochetes in the brain (S'). In a sense it has, but the sense is not one which makes either of the propositions, If Y then S', or, If S' then Y, analytic. It is not yet a contradiction to talk about revising the etiological hypotheses concerning paresis, for example to include another causative agent, such as gonococci. (In fact, there is another, independent, term in pathology for which the suggested sentences are analytic, viz., neurosyphilis: paresis is one possible consequence of neurosyphilis). So the symptoms S are still the criteria for the disease. Now, *that* sentence is not a contradiction, and it is for that reason that I have not accepted Wittgenstein's terminology in the present paper. Symptoms may well

be criteria. Further, both such symptoms, and ones that are not criteria, and aspects of the individual and familial history, and the results of serological and histological tests (which are not usually called symptoms), are called indicators. It seemed to me in the spirit of Wittgenstein's work, if not according to the letter (at least of the Blue and Brown Books), to employ a terminology more nearly in accord with actual usage. Actually, Wittgenstein's use of the term "criterion" more nearly coincides with what is known in medicine as a pathognomonic symptom; one which is absolutely specific to a particular disease. Such symptoms are comparatively rare; and they are not usually a criterion in my sense of a property referred to in a meaning rule.

7. *Dispositions, Traits, and Sensations.* Dispositional concepts have commonly been regarded as part of, or very close to the observation language (Carnap). In fact they have a more sophisticated structure. The Y-type concept was defined as the cause of a cluster concept S—the syndrome-cluster. A simple dispositional concept is defined as the property of responding in a particular way to R, i.e., to specific variations V, in the environmental situation, i.e., as the property of causal susceptibility of type R to a variable V. As in the Y case, a presupposition is involved, namely that there is such a property; this is not a matter of simple observation, but a relatively complicated inference about the correct explanation of the observed recurrence of the particular variation-response pattern. An alternative explanation, which must be excluded, is that the recurrence is due to the interaction of special local external causes; for example, we must decide that the breakdown of a particular solid when immersed in a liquid L is not due to the operation of ultrasonic standing waves in the observed samples of the liquid or to attack by impurities, etc., before we can call it L-soluble.

Character traits such as generosity or meanness are one step more complicated than a simple disposition in that the variable and response are usually cluster concepts, or at least clusters themselves. There are cases of special interest here where we are led to apply the same term even when no natural cluster exists; the classic example is that of dishonesty, where we may discover that lying, cheating, and stealing, the three main criteria, are not correlated with each other. This does not destroy the social utility of the term, though it may impair its value for personality-theory.

Finally, we come, armed with distinctions, to the problem of other minds. What I have to say is very simple. Toothache is definable for an intersubjective language as the sensation char-

acteristically associated with certain *physical* conditions, which characteristically manifests itself in grimaces and behavior of a certain kind. I put in the clause about *physical* conditions because I think it does make sense to say you think you have a toothache, but you haven't, e.g., because you haven't any teeth (cf. phantom limbs), though of course it wouldn't make sense to say you think you have a pain like a toothache, but you haven't. I put in the clause about manifestations because I think toothaches in other people are just like disease entities in being conditionally definable hypothetical entities. I use the term "sensation" without circularity because this can be learnt (albeit via a similar route) more easily than toothache; but it is, in a sense, dispensable. The logic of this definition is one step more complicated than the simple disease definition in that both quasi-causal and effectual strands are built in. In my terms, we see that such a definition rules out the possibility that we could refer to something as toothache if people adored it, fought for it, smiled in a contented way when they had achieved it, etc., because this would violate the "characteristic" manifestation clause. And it rules out toothaches in trees and toes, via the "characteristically associated with" clause. But it is ontologically non-behavioristic (unlike Wittgenstein's Blue Book position) since (a) it is a definition by differentia within the class of sensations; and (b) if we eliminate the term "sensation" in favor of the behavior, etc., that characterize this wider class, we can do so only by using an open-ended Y-type definition, so that sensations will be there in spirit if not in name. And so they should be. We have thus avoided several undesirable positions, which is at least a negative kind of virtue.

Wittgenstein's view of the matter in *Philosophical Investigations* is not very different from the above, as far as he made it explicit, or Albritton has been able to uncover it. I hope I have done something to make it more explicit, and I hope this will at least have the virtue that we can more readily decide whether to improve it or discard it.

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PERSONAL IDENTITY AND MEMORY *

PERSONS, unlike other things, make statements about their own pasts, and can be said to know these statements to be true. This fact would be of little importance, as far as the problem of

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