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Analyzing Concepts and Allocating Referents

Philip Pettit

What does philosophical theory seek in accounts of the familiar topics it addresses: time or change or causation, belief or intention or freewill, value or responsibility, justice or liberty? One broad family of responses suggests that it primarily tries to analyze the concepts that we express in such terms and their cognates, while another insists that the main aim is to explain what the patterns tracked by those concepts involve, assuming that the patterns are indeed real: it explores the properties or configurations of properties that constitute them. This chapter argues that those approaches highlight different aspects of the philosophical task and defends a more ecumenical perspective on the issue raised.

The analysis of the concept in any such case is an important part of the philo-sophical exercise but has to be complemented by an explanation of what constitutes the pattern it tracks, assuming again that it does track something real. Where the first part of the exercise involves conceptual analysis, the second involves allocating a referent to the concept analyzed. The analysis of the concept is a form of interpretation insofar as it teases out connotations of the term involved, the allocation of a property is a form of interpretation insofar as it identifies that which the term stands for.[1]

Thus, if the analysis of causation argues that every causal relationship has to take time and involve local connections between cause and effect, the allocation of a referent to that concept must identify in the world—inevitably, the world as seen from within a certain theory—a relation that explains those temporal and spatial features. If the analysis of freewill argues that every freely chosen act must be such that the agent could have done otherwise, the allocation of a referent to that concept must identify a feature of agents that explains why, in an appropriate sense, that sort of claim might be true. If the analysis of value argues that the judgment that

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[1] Allocative interpretation is interpretation in the sense in which we speak of interpreting formal symbols in logic. Allocating a referent to a concept addresses the problem of locating that referent in a background picture of the universe—Frank Jackson (1998) describes this as the location problem in metaphysics—and this makes the term 'allocation' particularly appropriate to the way in which I use it here.

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something is valuable is non-inductively connected with a desire for its realization, the allocation of a property to the concept of value has to make sense of why that connection should hold. And so on.

This analytical-allocative pattern will only obtain, of course, in the case of concepts that are designed to track how things are in the world, not just to express feeling or emotion or whatever. And it will only obtain in the case of concepts that do actually succeed in tracking something objective about how the world is. But the focus of the chapter will be precisely on concepts that meet those conditions, being both cognitively oriented and actually satisfied. More specifically, it will be on concepts of that kind that are non-basic: that is, concepts such that mastery of them presupposes a mastery of distinct, simpler concepts. The concepts of causation, freewill, and value may be taken as exemplars of the targets addressed.[2]

To focus on cognitively oriented, actually satisfied concepts is not to suppose that there are no purely expressive concepts and no concepts that fail to track anything real; it is not to beg the question against expressivism or error theory. The attempt to analyze various concepts may reveal that they are purely expressive, the attempt to allocate properties to them that they embody an error about the world. Like the focus on non-basic concepts, the focus on cognitively oriented, actually satisfied concepts is adopted merely with a view to simplifying and sharpening the topic of discussion.

The chapter is in five sections. The first argues for a particular picture of what conceptual analysis involves, according to which it reveals various commitments made by those who use a term or concept. The second section discusses two models of how analytical and allocative interpretation might relate to one another; under one model analysis determinately constrains the allocation of referent, under the other it provides a limited license for allocating one of a number of candidate referents. The third section argues that the license model of how analysis relates to allocation applies in salient, philosophically interesting cases, distinguishes between two different grounds on which it may apply, and illustrates how it is used and to what effect. The fourth section considers the distinct genealogical approach to philosophical theory, arguing that it represents a way of serving the analytical and allocative purposes at once. And the final, fifth section illustrates the license model in action, documenting the extent to which the commitments surrounding the concept of political freedom leave room for many different accounts of what constitutes it as an ideal: that is, of what referent ought to be allocated to the concept, at least for the purposes pursued in political theory.

The license model defended argues that there is a great deal of room for negotiation on two fronts. First, in determining the right specification to link with a concept like that of causation or freewill or value: that is, in determining what counts as an instance of causation, an exercise of freewill, or a form of value. And, second, in identifying the property or other entity that satisfies the specification: in explaining what constitutes causation or freewill or value. It defends an image in which analytical and allocative materials impose a discipline on philosophical theory but

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[2] There is a discussion in a footnote in section 4 on how bedrock concepts may lend themselves to what I describe as a genealogical treatment.

make room for imagination as well as method. In taking that line it connects with a variety of recent, more revisionary approaches to philosophy.[3]

1. The Place of Analysis in Philosophy

Two Inadequate Accounts of Analysis

By the comments offered so far, analysis teases out the connotations of a term or concept like that of causation or freewill or value. That very abstract and vague account of what it does can be articulated more concretely and exactly in a number of different ways. Before offering the articulation endorsed here, it may be useful to mention two alternative accounts that it opposes. One is defended by G. E. Moore (1903) and takes us back to the early days of analytical philosophy. The other is assumed by Mark Johnston and Sarah-Jane Leslie (2012) in the course of an attack on a particular school of philosophical analysis, which they describe as the Canberra plan.[4]

According to Moore's view, analysis of any term or concept, X, consists in spelling out the meaning of the word involved, where the meanings of their words are supposed to be immediately accessible to competent speakers. Competent speakers, roughly, are speakers who understand what they are saying. Although Moore does not make this qualification, they not only exclude those lacking expertise in the relevant language but also those who rely on the understanding of others to fix the meanings of their words. This is what I do when I use the word 'quark' or 'boson' or even 'force', intending that it be taken to have the meaning that expert physicists give it.

Moore's view of analysis leads him to propose an open-question test, as it has come to be known, for whether an analysis of a concept is successful. According to that test, the analysis of a concept, 'X', say one that equates it with 'Y+Z', must satisfy the following condition: that it should make no sense for the competent person to be able to ask with an open mind whether an instance of Y+Z really is an instance of X. That ought to be almost as pointless as asking whether an instance of X really is an instance of X. The analysis of a bachelor as an unmarried male might pass this test but few analyses of the kind that philosophers have traditionally canvassed would do so; it sets the bar for a successful analysis so high that it is doubtful if many concepts are analyzable by that criterion.

According to Johnston and Leslie, to turn to the other view, what analysis in the style of the Canberra plan seeks to do is to assemble those associated, allegedly general claims that guide competent speakers in their use of any term or concept, X. The idea is that those claims will spell out the 'application conditions' of the term in question, if

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[3] The approaches I have in mind are well represented in this volume. They are associated with figures as different as Rudolf Carnap, W. V. O. Quine, Peter Strawson, Sally Haslanger, Peter Railton, David Chalmers, and indeed the editors of the volume, Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett. For a book-length development of one such approach, with a critical but fair overview of alternatives, see (Cappelen 2018).

[4] Their critique is focused particularly on the work of Frank Jackson (1998), including a joint paper with David Chalmers (2001).

not its Moorean meaning; they will determine when the term applies and when it does not. They take the Canberra plan to be inspired and implemented by David Lewis but focus in particular on the work of Frank Jackson (1998), including a joint paper with David Chalmers (2001).

As against this plan of analysis, however, Johnston and Leslie draw on empirical findings to argue that it is not general but generic claims that guide competent speakers in their mastery and employment of different terms. Generic claims about things that deserve to be described as X's are truths that hold only of some X's but are so salient to speakers that they serve to mark out the category effectively. Examples might be: 'lions have manes', when only mature males do, and 'mosquitoes carry malaria', when only some species of mosquito are carriers. If the goal of analysis is to identify the application conditions for a term like 'X', according to their critique, then looking to the claims that guide speakers will not deliver the end sought. It will leave analysts with truths that hold only of some X's or, worse, will lead them to misrepresent those truths as holding of all.

Where Moore's picture of analysis sets the bar of successful analysis so high that analysis is impossible in the case of most phenomena, this alternative picture sets it so low that analysis is of little or no philosophical interest. The first approach suggests that few terms or concepts in our vocabulary can be analyzable, since only few tolerate an analysis that satisfies the open-question test. The second suggests that while it may be easy to identify the claims that guide us as competent speakers, there is no philosophical point in trying to isolate them; they are not general claims of the sort that a philosophical analysis would naturally seek.

But there is a mistaken assumption that is endorsed in common by these two representations of analysis and once we recognize the mistake involved, we can see our way to a very different account. The two accounts both assume that the claims that analysis seeks to isolate in relation to any term or concept 'X' must all lie within the easy grasp of competent users; they must all be platitudes that answer to the untutored intuition of speakers. But, as we shall now see, it is not true that analysis inevitably targets, or ought to target, only claims that are matters of common intuition.[5]

An Alternative Account of Analysis

A common theme among philosophers who give importance to conceptual analysis, including those associated with the Canberra plan, is precisely that the claims that analysis seeks to isolate may not be readily accessible to ordinary speakers. There may have to be a sense in which speakers acknowledge those claims, knowing them to be true, but this does not mean that they have to be able to recognize them readily as truths. As Frank Jackson and I (1990: 35) put the point in arguing for an analysis of certain psychological concepts, 'what people know is not limited to what they can write down on paper off the bat' (see too Pettit 1998).

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[5] The mistaken assumption identified here may explain the now common belief that analysis should be supplemented, if not replaced, by empirical investigation of the claims that speakers actually find intuitive: that experimental philosophy, so called, should seek out a census of such intuitions.

But how does it come to be the case that speakers are committed to general truths of the kind that analysis seeks to identify, without being poised to spell out the claims involved as matters of immediate intuition? The answer is that exchanges between speakers can be informative and useful only to the extent that they make certain presuppositions in common, where those presuppositions may often be quite difficult to isolate.

In any exchanges, speakers must assume as a default—a defeasible default—that they are addressing the same subject-matter, not using the same words to mean different things; otherwise it would be hard for them to initiate or maintain conversations.[6] But the participants in a conversation will be unable to sustain that default if it turns out that they differ greatly in the things that they each presuppose about matters bearing on the terms they employ.

If I use the term 'X' in such a conversation, claiming for example that all X's are F, I will communicate nothing to you unless we each hold by various beliefs that help to identify the same things as X's and to identify the same property as F-ness. And I will have no ground for thinking that I can communicate something to you unless I assume, and assume that you assume, that we share those beliefs. At the limit, indeed, the beliefs may have to be a matter of common assumption or common ground, with each of us holding them, holding that each of us holds them, holding that each holds that each of us holds them, and so on (Lewis 1969).

The presuppositions we share as interlocutors with one another may vary, of course, depending on how far our backgrounds or interests coincide. But in order for conversations to connect with one another across different groups of interlocutors, there will have to be presuppositions that are shared quite widely in a linguistic community and shared as a matter of common assumption. Every conversation will start from a purportedly shared set of presuppositions and put them to the test. The presuppositions will pass that test and make a good claim to be shared as a matter of common assumption, just insofar as the conversation does not uncover and revise them or does not degenerate into a squabble.

The lesson of these observations is that speakers will be able to maintain the default assumption that they are talking about the same things, and considering the same issues about those things—that they are talking about the same X's, for example, and considering the same issue in asking whether they are all F—only insofar as they share a variety of presuppositions as a matter of common assumption. Those presuppositions are likely to include beliefs about the conditions under which their words apply, constituting true assertions; about when the truth of some assertions rules in or rules out the truth of others, or indeed rules neither way; about what such truths imply for the actions it is sensible to take in one or another

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[6] For a defense of the default assumption of common address, see (Pettit 1993). It represents an important point of convergence—but only partial convergence—with the view defended by Laura and Francois Schroeter (2014). It is consistent with the line taken of course, that the community assumed in the conversation may vary, so that in one context a word is used on the assumption of common address with a wide group of speakers, in another on the assumption of common address only with a specialized group. Scientists may use a word like 'electron' or 'valence' or 'gene' with one assumption in speaking to ordinary folk, and with another in speaking with fellow specialists; the common ground may be wide and shallow in the one case, narrow and deep in the other.

situation; and so on. They will constitute more or less common ground on which any conversation is bound to build (Stalnaker 1978).

It should be clear that the presuppositions that constitute common ground in this sense may not be readily accessible to any participants in a conversation; few may be able to spell them out, let alone write them down off the bat. That they are common ground may only appear in the fact that speakers are likely to be surprised, even dumbfounded, if someone takes a line in assertion or objection or argument that is inconsistent with them. People's disposition to such surprise will testify to the fact that there is a sense in which they each accept the presuppositions and assume that others accept them; perhaps assume this, indeed, as a matter of common assumption.[7]

For an example of a presupposition that is widely shared among competent speakers, consider the claim that is part of almost every analysis of evaluative concepts: viz., that evaluative facts are supervenient on, and indeed fixed by, non-evaluative facts, however the divide is made between those two categories.[8] The thesis is that there can be no evaluative difference between any two items without a non-evaluative difference, because any such difference has to be explained in non-evaluative terms. That claim is not a platitude in the ordinary sense of a banal, immediately intuitive claim.[9] It becomes compelling only after reflection—typically, philosophical reflection—on the fact that it would make no sense to say that A and B differ in value while claiming that they do not differ in any other way. If you made such a claim in exchange with others, you would put yourself out of the conversation.

This example typifies the sort of fact that philosophical analysis claims to be able to uncover. Other examples would include purported facts, no doubt in need of qualification, like the following: that one event can be the cause of another only if it is locally connected to the other, whether directly or indirectly; that a system counts as an agent only if, in general, it has purposes, forms reliable representations, and pursues those purposes reliably according to those representations; that to hold a representation such as the belief that p is to be prepared to act and argue as if it were the case that p; and that to enjoy freewill in the exercise of a certain choice, performing it voluntarily, is to be fit to be held responsible for the choice.

The claims that philosophical analysis aspires to support, then, extend beyond the immediately intuitive and the banal. They constitute working assumptions to which competent speakers are committed by their shared argumentative and related habits and may go well beyond anything that is accessible without much thought. For that reason, I will describe them as conceptual commitments. How those commitments come to be generated and shared is not a topic that can be investigated here, although

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[7] If this is so, then it would support a very different role for experimental philosophy from that associated in an earlier footnote with the assumption that analysis targets only matters of immediate intuition. Rather than seeking a census of intuitions, experimental philosophy would do better to identify the presuppositions of speakers that have the following character: if speakers begin to make contributions that are inconsistent with them, then that dumbfounds interlocutors.

[8] For an account that qualifies this claim, while describing it as 'the least controversial thesis in meta-ethics', see (Rosen 2014).

[9] It is unfortunate that the word 'platitude' is often used by defenders of the Canberra plan, as indeed Johnston and Leslie (2012) emphasize.

it ought to be clear that argument and exchange depends on their being present as a matter of common awareness among participants.

I said earlier that even philosophers broadly associated with the Canberra plan recognize that the commitments unearthed in analysis may be not be readily available to intuition. This is particularly salient from the fact that they expect analysis in some areas to uncover the sorts of widespread or holistic connections that can be spelled out only by resort to complicated Ramsey sentences, as they are known. The idea is that there are networks of related concepts such that to posit that one applies may be to require, and so implicitly to posit, a pattern of application across many other concepts in the set as well. Ramsey-style analyses have been routinely invoked in the analysis of mental and scientific concepts (D. Lewis 1983a) but have also been defended in other areas, as in the analysis of moral concepts (Jackson and Pettit 1995).

2. Interpretation, Analytical and Allocative

After Analysis

Taking analysis to uncover the commitments incurred by our use of certain terms or concepts, rather than recording just our unreflective intuitions, lets us see that it may be a significant exercise in philosophy. But analysis, of course, is incomplete, at least on our assumption that the concept analyzed is designed to characterize or track things—it is not just a device for expressing desire or feeling or whatever—and is successful in this role: there is something it actually tracks. Analysis opens the way to asking what the concept directs us to in the world, as we understand the world: what referent ought to be allocated to it, constituting what we conceptualize, for example, as causation or freewill or value.

Philosophical accounts of any phenomenon naturally take the form of first providing an analysis of the appropriate concept and then determining what referent, if any, should be allocated to it. The referent allocated to the concept may be significant in a manner that vindicates the concept and associated discourse, explaining the importance attached to it in our practice. But it may also fail, by one or another background set of criteria, to count as significant, so that pairing it with the concept may amount to deflating, even debunking the discourse. We would take a deflating or debunking view of moral discourse, by standard criteria, if we took the concept of goodness or rightness to direct us just to the fact that it attracts us as something to recommend. And we would take that sort of view of causal discourse, by similar criteria, if we took the concept of a cause to direct us merely to a regular antecedent of the would-be effect.

The set of commitments associated with a concept may be structured in different ways and this structure will affect the way they play a role in selecting a referent for the term. The commitments may all be relevant and necessary in selecting a referent, so that they constitute a regular, conjunctive set. Or it may be necessary only that a certain number of commitments are satisfied by any referent, in which case, the relevant set will be a disjunct of proper subsets. In either event, to complicate matters further, the relevant set may be fixed on a standing basis or it may be filtered, now in

favor of one subset, now in favor of another, depending on the context of usage. In what follows, however, we may abstract from these complicating details; the claims made are defended on orthogonal grounds.

There are two pictures of how the analytical and allocative elements in this account of philosophical theory relate to one another. The first model takes the analysis of a concept to constrain the possible referent determinately, even uniquely; the second takes it to license the identification of any in a limited set of candidate referents: in effect, to license independent philosophical theorizing. We may describe these respectively as the constraint and the license models of the relationship between analysis and allocation, although strictly they should be described as the determinate-constraint model and the limited-license model.

The Constraint and License Models

The constraint model corresponds to what we described in the introduction as a standard picture of the relationship between analysis and allocation. According to this model or picture, the analysis of a concept puts us in a position to determine which among the properties or other items countenanced in a background, independently accepted view of the world should be allocated to it as its referent. The analysis takes the concept to constitute a more or less uniquely constraining template and the task on the allocative side is simply to identify the referent that satisfies the template.

The license model of how analysis and allocation connect is quite different. It suggests that despite our best efforts in analysis of any concept, it may well be that the analysis allows us to assign one or another type of referent to it: that it leaves that allocative choice open. The idea is that the purposes that shape the common language from which philosophical analysis generally begins are not very demanding, and that they may be perfectly well served by shared commitments that fail, by our view of the world, to identify a unique referent. Thus, analysis may give us a great deal of latitude as philosophers to say what in the world constitutes the phenomenon targeted by the concept: what, for example, constitutes causation or freewill or value.

That the commitments fail to identify a unique referent, however, does not mean that the discourse in which the concept figures must suffer from a damaging form of ambiguity; this would mean that interlocutors could not be clear about exactly what anyone had in mind in using the term. The differences between the distinct referents that our view of the world enables us to draw may not matter for the purposes of ordinary conversation; thus, for those purposes the concept may refer us just to an equivalence class of referents. Or while there is some ambiguity, with the concept being used in one context to pick out one referent, in another to pick out a different one, the differences of context may be well enough marked for this variation not to create a problem.

For an example of the first possibility, think about how we might speak of one event determining another, without drawing a finer philosophical distinction between causal determination and the sort of constitutive determination that holds, as we noted above, between the descriptive and the evaluative; that distinction may not matter in ordinary exchange. For an example of the second, we can turn to the concept of political freedom discussed in the final section. To anticipate that

discussion, we may focus in some contexts on the way physical constraints remove someone's latitude of choice, and in another on legal constraints alone; we may say in one context that someone is unfree to vote because of being ill, in another that despite being ill they are free to vote because of having citizenship.

As analysis is necessary on the constraint model, so it remains necessary on the license model. A theory of X—a theory of causation or freewill or value—will only count as a theory of X insofar as it explains why any instance of X must broadly satisfy the commitments associated with the concept 'X': as we naturally, say, it must satisfy the connotations of the term. Let the theory not require any instance of X to satisfy those commitments, or not require that it at least come close to satisfying them, and the theory will change the subject: it will not be a theory of X, properly understood, but of something more or less related, X*.[10]

The necessity of analysis, in particular analysis of something close to what we describe as conceptual commitments, is defended by Mark Johnston (1992: 221) in his earlier work on color.

> There are many beliefs about color to which we are susceptible, beliefs resulting from our visual experience and our tendency to take that visual experience in certain ways. Some of these beliefs are "core" beliefs in this sense: were such beliefs to turn out not to be true we would then have trouble saying what they were false of, i.e., we would be deprived of a subject matter rather than having our views changed about a given subject matter.

Insofar as a phenomenon like color is conceptualized on a basis that involves holding by such core beliefs or commitments, any philosophical theory of color is required, on pain of changing the subject, to support at least a good many of them.

But while the license model resembles the constraint model in making analysis necessary for a philosophical account of any phenomenon, it generally leaves much more for philosophical theorizing to do. Suppose we are interested in a theory of causation or freewill or value, to stick with those examples. The fact that there is a choice to be made in allocating a referent to the corresponding concept means that there is work to be done in selecting the best referent to allocate: in developing the best view available, by independent criteria, of what it is that constitutes causation or value or freewill.

Thus suppose, plausibly, that it is an inescapable commitment associated with ascribing freewill that the agent could have done otherwise in any relevant choice. In that case, we must find a pattern in the choice in virtue of which that counterfactual, or something close to it, holds. And if we are naturalists, perhaps even determinists, we face a well-known challenge in identifying a pattern in the world, as we take the world to be, that would do this job. In facing that challenge, analysis as such will not

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[10] These remarks on the license model presuppose a wish to maintain continuity with the way of thinking encoded in our ordinary usage of a term. What is also possible, of course, is that we might judge that while a term can serve in broadly the same role—say, it can preserve its extension—the commitments associated with it, as revealed in standard analysis, should be radically altered. This is the 'ameliorative' line that Sally Haslanger (2012) has defended with concepts of race and gender; for a broadly similar approach, see (Eklund 2017).

help; it will merely provide a condition of success: that our theory must make sense of the counterfactual.

Two Grounds for License

The most straightforward, if not the most common way, in which analysis may license independent philosophical theorizing arises when the commitments it links with a term or concept are relatively few and undemanding. For an example of this possibility consider John Rawls's approach to the theory of political justice.

Different political theorists, so Rawls (1971: 5–6) imagines, 'agree that institutions are just when no arbitrary distinctions are made between persons in the assigning of basic rights and duties and when the rules determine a proper balance between competing claims to the advantages of social life'. And with that base of agreement to determine the common topic they address, they generate conceptions of justice that divide on 'which differences among persons are relevant in determining rights and duties' and 'which division of advantages is appropriate'. Whether differences are relevant, and a division appropriate, will presumably be determined, on this approach, by independent judgments of moral merit.

Where Rawls uses the language of concept and conception, we would speak of concept and concept-property pairing. But his picture of what the philosophical theory of justice involves fits in a straightforward way with the license model. Conceptual analysis identifies a few, relatively vague commitments associated with the idea of justice: that there be no arbitrary distinctions made between persons and that a proper balance be established between people's competing claims. And those commitments then open up the question of what referent to allocate to the concept. They give us as philosophers the license to think about what constitutes justice at the level of institutional arrangements.

When the model gives a license for independent, non-analytical theorizing of the kind illustrated here, the analysis identifies a few determinate commitments, $C1–Cn$, that might be satisfied by any of a range of properties, $P1$ or $P2\ldots$ or Pn, that are available within our view of the world: within our view of the social institutions possible. And the job of philosophical theory is to argue in favor of one or another property, allocating it as referent to the concept: to argue on the basis of independent criteria that that property should be taken to constitute justice in the analyzed sense. Following that procedure, of course, Rawls himself argues for an institutional framework that satisfies his two principles of justice, one involving liberty, the other socioeconomic equality.

Analysis may license independent philosophical theorizing on a second quite different ground as well. Rather than isolating so few commitments that any of a range of properties can satisfy them, it may isolate so many putative commitments that it licenses pruning them in this or that manner and, depending on what subset survives the pruning, allocating this or that referent to the concept. Where the license given in the too-few case is a license to pick and choose externally to analysis, the license given in this case is to pick and choose internally: that is, to pick and choose among which putative commitments to ratify as important.

In the work already cited, Mark Johnston (1992) defends a view of the commitments surrounding the concept of color that fits with this picture. We 'speak more

inclusively about color', he says, 'as we underwrite more beliefs with some legitimate title to be included in the core' (p. 221). Thus, suggesting that we may privilege one or another subset of those commitments, an important question to address is how far we may strip down the commitments endorsed without depriving ourselves of the subject. 'How far short of speaking ever so inclusively do we have to fall in order to say truly that the external world is colored' (p. 222). The suggestion is that the commitments associated with the concept of color allow us, depending on whether we privilege the set as a whole, or some proper subset, to have one or another theory of what constitutes color, identifying one or another referent for a color concept. Johnston (1992) takes this suggestion, not just to bear on color, but to 'apply to many if not all concepts' (p. 222).[11]

In the first sort of case, as we saw, philosophical theorizing will have to be driven by independent, non-analytical criteria, such as the criteria of moral merit that Rawls would presumably invoke to support his theory of justice. In the second sort of case, independent, non-analytical criteria are also likely to play a role in supporting one or another theory. There may be analytically motivated reasons for preferring to prune relevant commitments in one direction or another. But there are also likely to be independent, non-analytical reasons for preferring one pruning to another: viz., that under the preferred pruning there is then a salient referent that can be allocated to the concept: a property that can be taken to constitute the phenomenon in question. Such considerations might plausibly operate in the case of color, arguing for ratifying one or another pruning on the grounds that there is something in the scientific image of the world—say, a spectral reflectance profile—that can then be allocated as the referent of a color concept.

The external and internal grounds on which conceptual analysis may license independent philosophical theorizing are not exclusive of one another. Suppose for example that we avail ourselves of the internal license to prune the putative commitments associated with color to a given set, C1, C2, and C3. It may still be the case that those commitments allow us to allocate one or another property to the concept; they may give us an external license to choose between those properties in explaining what constitutes color.

3. In Favor of the License Model of Analysis and Allocation

The Basic Case

The license picture of how analysis relates to allocation looks more plausible than the constraint model, since analysis often falls short of giving us one clear winner for the referent of a concept. First, to rehearse the abstract possibilities, the commitments that analysis of a concept picks out, as in the Rawls example, may allow for the allocation of one or another referent; this means that there is an

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[11] Johnston (1992) suggests that the commitments encoded in our use of color concepts may not cohere with one another, in case it will be obligatory, not just permissible, to prune the total set in favor of one or another coherent subset. I ignore this possibility in the current chapter.

external ground for license in allocating a referent. Second, as in the example from
Johnston, analysis may allow for privileging one or another set of conceptual
commitments, where different sets invite the allocation of different referents to
the concepts; this means that there is an internal ground—a ground internal to
analysis—for license in allocating a referent. And, third, analysis may fail on both
counts, identifying a number of permissible sets of commitments to associate with a
concept, where at least some of those sets may allow for allocating one of a number
of referents to the concept.

We may return to the concepts of causation, freewill, and value to illustrate the
failure of the constraint model, and the extent to which analysis provides a license to
theorize in any of a limited number of ways about such phenomena.

Different accounts of causation differ on how far causation should be linked with
counterfactual dependence or should be taken to presuppose a process like the
transfer of energy; on whether it presupposes natural laws or the other way around;
and on how far various plausible commitments among ordinary thinkers—say, the
commitment to exclusively forward-looking causation—can be dropped. These dif-
ferences may reflect different views on the commitments we make in positing causal
connections and drawing inferences from them. Or they may reflect different views
on the best referent to allocate to the concept of a causal connection, assuming a
more or less agreed set of commitments associated with the concept. Or of course
both problems may affect the attempt, on the basis of analysis alone, to construct a
philosophically acceptable account of causation.

As the analysis of causation may provide a license to theorize in a number of
different ways about it, so the same is true with the other two examples. Different
accounts of freewill differ on how far it is tied to practices of responsibility,
on whether any exercise of freewill is something the agent had the capacity not
to trigger, and on how capacity in that sense is to be understood. Different
accounts of value differ on issues like whether there is a non-inductive connec-
tion between something's being valuable and its being attractive, whether value is
something we posit as a matter of determinable fact, and whether judgments of
value can be based on direct intuition. And in each case the problem, plausibly, is
that analysis does not provide a determinate constraint on how to think about
freewill or value; it provides a license, whether of an external or internal kind, to
identify a suitable referent for each concept on the basis of independent criteria
of theory-choice.

These observations are meant to show that philosophical theory cannot live by
analysis alone: that at least in cases like those illustrated, a candidate analysis needs
to be paired with an account of what referents the analysis would allow us to
allocate to the concept and of which candidate scores highest on suitable criteria.
Analytical interpretation is certainly necessary in any philosophical theory of X; if
it neglects analysis, the theory may change the subject and fail to be a theory of
X. But, equally certainly, allocative interpretation is needed too and may have to be
determined in the presence of a license to go in one direction or another. Any
philosophical account of a phenomenon X is likely to have to satisfy two sets of
criteria, then, one answering to reflection on the commitments we make in
employing the concept of X, the other to an independent sense of what is best

taken to constitute X: what referent it is best to allocate to the concept, in light of our overall theory of the world.[12]

The License Model and the Canberra Plan

The license model need not mark a departure from the methodology associated broadly with the Canberra plan. Frank Jackson and I (1995) follow that methodology in developing a meta-ethical theory that we describe, in the title of the paper, as 'Moral Functionalism' (p. 23). And in doing so we explicitly invoke the sort of license discussed here, once for analytically internal considerations and once for reasons that go beyond analysis.[13]

We go with the internal version of the license model when we list a comprehensive list of 'commonplaces'—purported commitments—that most of us will endorse on reflection about a concept like that of rightness or fairness, and then make the point that they leave us with a decision as to exactly which should count as a priori: that is, which should be ratified as part of the final analysis of the concept. They are 'candidates for a priori truths', we say, acknowledging that 'we may expect debates, of course, about which commonplaces are indeed a priori true': which should be suitably ratified (p. 23). The point made here is exactly like the point made by Johnston, when he suggests that we may analyze the concept of color more or less inclusively, as he puts it, depending on how close we come to privileging all of the core beliefs or commitments associated with the concept.

Jackson and I offer a network analysis in the paper on moral functionalism, arguing that concepts like those of rightness and fairness and the like are picked out by roles that they play in a network they form with other normative concepts. But we recognize that even after we have selected the subset of commonplaces to privilege, exercising the internal discretion that the license model allows, the analysis leaves us with external discretion, again in line with the license model, about exactly which sort of property to allocate to each of the concepts.

First, we note, the analysis 'leaves open whether rightness, say, is the ground-level (descriptive) property that occupies the rightness role, for example, the property of maximizing happiness, or whether it is the higher-order property of having a

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[12] Timothy Williamson (2007: fn 121–2) takes the sort of analysis associated with the Canberra plan, as exemplified in (Jackson 1998), to be bedeviled by the problem that in many cases there will be a number of 'admissible candidates' for the role of referent for the analyzed term or concept—say, the property it ascribes; that these cannot reliably be conjoined or disjoined to constitute an admissible candidate; and that there may be no uniquely 'natural' candidate to select, even if 'natural' can be appropriately characterized. He would presumably see the line I take in this chapter as seeking vainly to make a virtue of necessity. For his own view of how we are guided in our application of concepts—in his terms, of what binds together the uses of the same word by different agents—see pp. 123–30.

[13] The approach has sometimes been described in a way that seems, rightly or wrongly, to jar with the license model. David Lewis (1983a) may suggest that the concepts analyzed in standard examples constrain the identification of a referent uniquely, for example, when he speaks of the best deserver of a name—the referent that best answers to the concept, under that analysis—or despairing of finding such a referent, speaks of identifying a near-enough deserver. And David Braddon-Mitchell (2003) may make a similar suggestion, when he argues that the analysis of our concept of *qualia* provides materials such that it might have one referent, W, under one conception of the universe, but a different referent in another, even another that also recognizes W; the referent in the first conception would be a near-enough deserver, the referent in the second a best or at least a better deserver.

property that occupies the rightness role' (pp. 27–8). And, second, if the analysis chosen 'identifies the moral properties with the ground-level, role-filling properties', we say that it leaves open whether 'to think of a role in folk moral theory as picking out a moral property in rigid or in non-rigid fashion' (p. 28).[14] A final, philosophical theory might exercise the license allowed on these fronts, either by finding independent grounds for choosing one or the other reading in each case or, in the absence of such grounds, by taking the referents to be equivalence classes of the possibilities that analysis leaves open.

The License Model and Natural Properties

Not only does the license model of the relation between analysis and allocation fit with the Canberra plan, it can also help to make sense of David Lewis's (1983b) views on the relevance of the naturalness or elite-ness of potential referents in interpreting concepts. The claim he makes is that if there is a choice about which of a number of properties to take as referent of a concept, we ought to opt for that which is, in his terminology, the most natural: intuitively, the one with the best claim to approximate cutting nature at its joints, in an established metaphor, not at the joints that happen to be privileged by our conventions.

This view has sometimes been taken to involve a belief in reference magnetism, as it has been called: a belief that the greater naturalness of the property attracts the concept towards it, as if by magic. In our terms, this might be cast as the view that the analysis of a concept is not determined only by the conceptual commitments of speakers but also by an independent fact: the fact that one of the referents that those commitments would allow is more natural than the others. But such a picture does not fit well with other aspects of Lewis's philosophy of language, in particular his emphasis on the role of conventions in fixing the meanings of our words (Schwartz 2014); this would suggest that the analysis of a concept should be guided only by the conventionally registered commitments of speakers. The tension can be resolved, however, on the license model. The point is worth noting, whether or not it fits with everything that Lewis says on the topic.

The license model allows that the allocation of a referent to a concept may be analytically underdetermined: that it may not be uniquely constrained by the conceptual commitments of speakers. And that suggests that the relative naturalness of candidate referents may play a role, not in shaping the analysis of the concept—that is what reference magnetism involves—but in deciding on which referent it is best, by independent, non-analytical criteria, to allocate to it; we look in a moment at what those criteria might be. The idea is that naturalness does not figure in determining what counts as an X, for any concept 'X', but that it may figure in selecting the best theory of what constitutes X.

Thus, consider whether a color word or concept like 'green' refers to a continuing, relatively natural color property or to the relatively non-natural, 'gruesome' property,

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[14] As we think about what would be right in a possible, counterfactual world, the rigid option would have our thoughts target the actual filler of the role—say, the maximizing-happiness property—the non-rigid option would have them target whatever fills the role in that world, which may or may not be the happiness-related property.

invented by Nelson Goodman (1983), of being green if examined before time t, blue otherwise. The license model would allow us to take the referent of the concept to be the standing color, on the grounds that it is the more natural property, without relying on anything like reference magnetism. It might do this in either of two ways, one invoking an external reason, the other an internal reason, for choosing to allocate the more natural property to the concept.

The way of doing it that invokes an externally grounded license is the more straightforward. It would argue for pairing the color concept with the standing color as distinct from the gruesome counterpart, on the grounds that all the commitments associated with the concept of green are consistent with allocating one or the other referent, and that its greater naturalness argues in favor of allocating the standing color. The alternative approach, invoking an internally grounded license, would argue, first, that among the commitments governing the concept of green, one perfectly possible inclusion is a commitment to the effect that color properties have a sort of significance that is independent of whether and when they have been observed; and, second, that this commitment should be included in the analysis on the grounds that it would select the more natural, standing color as the referent to be allocated.[15]

Criteria of Allocation

The issue about naturalness raises the question, ignored so far, as to what criteria make one candidate referent more appealing than others, arguing on a non-analytical basis for preferring it in allocating the referent.

A general, plausible suggestion is that depending on the purpose associated with the use of a concept—ultimately the purpose of the sort of discourse in which it figures—a referent will be more suitable to the extent that it serves that purpose better. This would mean that with concepts that are part of an enterprise of mapping a given domain for explanatory ends, it will presumably be better that the concept should identify a property that pulls more explanatory weight, as it were, than one that pulls less. Assume, as Lewis does, that properties vary in their naturalness, where this higher-order property reflects the degree to which a property that bears it carves nature at the joints. In at least some explanatory enterprises, for example in the area of natural science, it will presumably be better to have a more natural rather than a less natural property allocated to a concept.

This thesis is implicitly endorsed in a common critique of ways of thinking that claim to explain—and even justify—existing, often oppressive social structures in ~~terms of~~ variations in class or gender or race ~~or the like~~. The critique is that those ways of thinking treat concepts like 'class' or 'gender' or 'race' as predicating natural properties, when they actually reflect variable modes of social organization. And the assumption behind the critique is that insofar as people mistakenly seek to explain social patterns in terms of such properties, they take the properties to cut nature at its joints, not around culturally variable divisions. The critique suggests that such

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[15] Wolfgang Schwartz (2014), who supports something like this line about grue-ness, is insistent that it does not constitute reference magnetism: see pp. 10–12. For another, congenial critique of such magnetism, see (Sundell 2012).

concepts deserve a debunking analysis under which the properties they ascribe are not as substantive as assumed in the ways of thinking criticized.

Epistemic enterprises may serve very different interests, of course, in different areas of inquiry (Habermas 1971). And to the extent to which they do, the criteria governing the referents that we privilege in the allocative interpretation of relevant concepts will presumably vary as well. Suppose, for example, that the interest in explaining one another's doings consists in being able to represent our respective responses as suitably rational and reason-sensitive: being able to see one another as conversable creatures with whom we might deliberate about things and interact to our mutual gain (Davidson 1984). In that case, it will be important that the concepts we deploy ascribe attitudes of a psychological sort, not just neural states; attitudes with contents we can recognize, rather than attitudes with gruesome contents; and attitudes that conform to requirements of rationality, at least within familiar limitations. Such attitudes may not cut nature at the joints but they will cut nature where it matters to us as mutual interpreters and interactants.

This is not the place to expand on the variety of epistemic interests and the different criteria they may support to govern the allocation of referents to the concepts we analyze. The topic comes up again in the final section of this chapter, where we look at the philosophical theory of freedom, as that property figures in political theory: a normative enterprise with distinctive guiding interests.

Despite the differences between different philosophical areas of theory, it is worth noting that in all of them we may say that, insofar as the theory allocates a particular referent to a concept, indicating the respects in which it is superior to alternative candidates, it will provide an explanation of the phenomenon targeted. The explanation will not be causal but constitutive. It will give an account of the phenomenon, assuming it is not primitive, that identifies in terms of other concepts conditions such that their satisfaction ensures and explains the realization of that phenomenon. Thus, any account of what causation or freewill or value consists in—or indeed class or gender or race—will identify conditions in natural or social reality such that if they are satisfied, then the phenomenon is bound to be present. The point, as we shall see, applies also in the case of political freedom.[16]

4. Genealogy: Melding Analytical and Allocative Interpretation

Before illustrating the license model in the theory of freedom, however, it will be useful to make a further observation. There is one particular methodology in philosophy that goes beyond the two-step approach of looking first for analysis, then for the allocation of referent. This consists in developing a story as to how

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[16] Daniel Stoljar (2017: chapters 5 and 6) provides a general account of the sort of philosophical explanation that provides information on what constitutes this or that phenomenon; he emphasizes rightly that depending on the level and kind of information it provides, the explanation may be more or less satisfying. Other accounts suggest that the sort of explanation needed at this point in philosophical theory should explore the ground of the phenomenon, as it is often called, see (Rosen 2010; Fine 2012).

various concepts could have arisen, in particular a vindicatory story that gives them suitable referents; if you like, it reverse-engineers the concepts it explains.

One clear example of such an approach is offered by H. L. A.Hart's (1961) classic study of the concept of law (Gardner 2013). Hart assumes, to begin with, that in almost any society certain norms like those against theft and violence, deception and infidelity, are bound to emerge and stabilize; to become internalized by members, as they prescribe conformity for themselves and others (p. 86); and, because of their importance in social life, to support a relatively authoritative assignment of corresponding rights and duties (pp. 84–5). He describes these norms as primary rules, arguing that they are regularities with which 'the general demand for conformity is insistent and the social pressure brought to bear on those who deviate or threaten to deviate is great' (p. 84); this 'social pressure may take only the form of a general diffused hostile or critical reaction', he says, stopping 'short of physical sanctions'.

Call this society Normitania, after the crucial and exclusive role of primary rules or social norms in securing social order. It does not matter from Hart's point of view that there may never have been a society of exactly the kind he postulates. All that he requires is that it should represent a real possibility, materializing under familiar social conditions in virtue of familiar human needs: this, at any rate, assuming the people are relatively equal in power (p. 195). He then argues for three claims: first, that our sense of human nature makes it intelligible, indeed predictable, that people would make certain unplanned adjustments in response to various problems arising in Normitania; second, that those adjustments would lead in aggregate to the emergence of a system of secondary rules, as he calls them, to regulate the operation of the primary rules; and, third, that those who live under that system—certainly those with official roles—would have a concept available to them, in particular a concept with a clear range of application, that corresponds to our concept of law.

Looking at the first step in his argument, there are a number of problems that primary rules would raise in Normitania, according to Hart. Being only informally established, they would often be uncertain or vague. In addition, they would be static, lacking the flexibility required for covering any novel circumstances that might come from changes in culture or technology. And finally, they would be inefficient in leaving it up to alleged offenders and would-be victims to agree on whether a norm was breached in a given case and on what recompense or retaliation should be implemented.

In response to these problems, Hart suggests in the second stage of his argument, the members of Normitania would be likely to improvise solutions, relying on the salience of certain procedures, the prominence of certain individuals, or the existence of certain precedents, to determine the approach to take. The responses might initially be ad hoc, with some individual or body being called upon to pass judgment in this or that case, or with some process or procedure being selected for that role. But they would be likely to consolidate over time, establishing patterns and procedures—secondary rules, in Hart's terminology—for dealing with the different issues arising.

Those rules would establish ways of determining what exactly any vague primary rules involve, how those rules can be amended to cope with changed circumstances, and the process to follow in passing judgment on whether someone has breached a rule and how the offense is to be rectified or sanctioned. He describes the secondary

rules, respectively, as rules of recognition, rules of change, and rules of adjudication, arguing that they would be likely to be internalized in the same manner as primary rules, at least amongst those on whom they confer various roles.

At the third stage of argument, which is more or less implicit in the text, Hart makes two plausible claims: that people living under this regime—or at the very least its officials—would likely have a single concept available to characterize the primary rules that are brought under the regulation of the secondary rules, as well as some of the secondary rules themselves; and that it is plausible to equate that concept with our concept of law, so that Normitania may now be better dubbed Lexitania. Grant these claims, and the genealogy provided supports the hypothesis that our concept of law serves the same purpose as the Lexitanian concept, supporting presumably the same commitments, and that the property that our concept predicates is just the property that Lexitanians find in primary and secondary rules.

Assuming that the hypothesis is accepted—I say nothing here about what would make it acceptable—the genealogical method that Hart illustrates has much to be said for it. Relying on just our interpretive sense that we would naturally equate the concept employed in Lexitania with our concept of law, ~~it avoids the task of working out the details of an analysis~~. Relying on the genealogy to identify the referent of the concept, ~~it avoids the task of looking at different possible referents to allocate to the concept~~. And to that extent it achieves at least some of the purposes that analysis and allocation, pursued as such, might have hoped to achieve. It removes any mystery as to how we could get the concept of law going, it makes sense of the role of the concept without debunking it, and it directs us to a plausible property that constitutes its referent: this is what the concept serves to ascribe.

There may be other purposes that a direct form of analytical and allocative interpretation might hope to realize better: say, in developing an explicit definition of the concept, or a more exact sense of the property it ascribes, or in distinguishing laws from other rules. But while the genealogy does not achieve those purposes explicitly, it ought to make it easier to realize them. Thus, the genealogical method might be seen as part substitute, part preliminary, to the more demanding, two-stage exercise.[17]

Broadly understood, the genealogical method illustrated may be extended to a range of cases, as when Edward Craig (1990) uses it to explore the concept of knowledge or Bernard Williams (2002) employs it in articulating the notion of truth and truthfulness; in (Pettit 2018a), I rely on it in much the same way to cast light on the wide network of ethical concepts.

Extending the sense of a genealogy somewhat, there are other cases too that illustrate something close to the method illustrated. Think of Wilfred Sellars's (1997) myth of Jones, according to which we could have developed concepts of mental experience and attitude by seeking a theoretical explanation for our

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[17] To add to its advantages, the genealogical method is capable in principle of teaching us important lessons about concepts that serve a bedrock role in our thinking, and are not analyzable in independent terms (Chalmers 2011); it can make sense of how we might find a use for those concepts, in particular a use that vindicates their employment. I try to put a broadly genealogical method to this sort of use in seeking to make sense of the concepts of rule and rule-following; see (Pettit 1993: part 1; 2002: part 1).

dispositions to make certain utterances and to take corresponding actions. Think of David Lewis's (1969) demonstration that as self-interested rational agents we could have coordinated with one another in familiar predicaments, and given rise to regularities of the kind that answer to the concept of a convention. Or think of Saul Kripke's (1980) story about how we could have introduced names as causally linked tags for the things we name, without sharing any single view of the descriptive character of the things named (Jackson 2004).

The genealogical method used in Hart and in these examples involves a story about how a whole society might develop a counterpart to the concept targeted, vindicating it in their application of the term. But it should be clear that this full-scale social element is strictly unnecessary from the point of view of the purpose served by the genealogy. And that directs us to another mode of genealogical explanation: the method of creature-construction described by H. P. Grice (1975). This involves telling a story about how even a single individual might construct in stages something complex like a robot; might develop concepts at each stage of construction to characterize the emerging entity; and might come to a point where we would say that the concept we were wanting to analyze—say, that of a belief or an intention—actually applies. The idea then, as in the social genealogies, is that the story would direct us to a likely referent to allocate to the concept: that which is realized in the robot.[18]

5. A Case Study: The Concept of Freedom

Since it has been a focus in my own recent work, I have chosen the concept of freedom in the social and political sense to illustrate in a little more detail how analytical and allocative interpretation work, and how they relate in this case as the license model suggests they would. The concept of freedom is ascribed to societies, people, choices, and actions but I shall focus in the first place on free choices. These are sets of options that are presented to an agent, where the agent can realize any option in the set, depending on his or her preferences.[19] Free actions may be taken to be exercises of free choice, free persons to be agents who are free to exercise suitable choices, and free societies to be communities where its members are free persons.[20]

Freedom is a good example with which to illustrate the license model, since the commitments associated with describing a choice as free are highly contestable and indeed contested. Thus, depending on which commitments are taken as significant,

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[18] The method of creature-construction is foreshadowed by Jonathan Bennett (1964) in his study of rationality, invoked by Michael Bratman (2014) in analysis of shared agency, for example, and by Peter Railton (2014) in analysis of belief. The approach taken by Christian List and me in analyzing the idea of group agency might also be cast in this mold; see (List and Pettit 2011).

[19] For more on the concept of an option, see (Pettit 2018b).

[20] This notion of a free action makes it richer than an action freely taken; an action may be freely taken when, unbeknownst to the agent, there is no other option available (Frankfurt 1969): the action is chosen in the presence of apparently acceptable alternatives and is, in that sense, voluntary (broadly following Olsaretti 2004). Equally, this notion of a free society is distinct from the more austere notion of a society that is self-determining: this might be controlled by an elite and contrast with the more traditional idea of a free state (Skinner 1998).

a different analysis is offered and a different property allocated as its referent. Perhaps the only core commitment that no analysis neglects is the assumption you will enjoy freedom in a choice only to the extent that you are not exposed to hindrance with otherwise available options. Let hindrance be understood in a descriptive sense and not, as in some accounts (Nozick 1974), in a sense that deems something to be a hindrance only if it is wrongful. With that assumption in the background, a number of questions arise as to the further assumptions guiding the concept. And analyses of freedom of choice vary, depending on the answers given. I distinguish five questions that play a particularly crucial role in determining the analysis selected.

The questions all bear on the hindrance that is relevant to the freedom of a choice. To put them in the form of a list, they can be formulated as questions about what sort of hindrance is necessary for reducing your freedom:

1. Does that hindrance have to prevent you from taking an option? Or does it extend to the sort of hindrance involved in penalizing a choice of option, threatening to penalize it, deceiving you about the options, or manipulating you into misperceiving them?
2. Does the hindrance have to be imposed on you from without, whether by other agents or by nature? Or does it extend to include hindrances that derive from psychological disorders or conditions: hindrances like those associated with morbid fears, for example, or obsessions?
3. Does the hindrance have to represent a form of voluntary or at least intentional intervention on the part of an agent or agents, individual or corporate?[21] Or does it extend to the hindrances that non-intentional obstacles can impose, or that arise as an unforeseen consequence of others' actions?
4. Is it necessary for a reduction in your freedom that the hindrance affects the option you actually prefer? Or is it sufficient that you would have suffered hindrance if you had tried to take another option instead?
5. Is it necessary for a reduction in your freedom, assuming another person is involved, that that person actually imposes the hindrance? Or is it sufficient that if their will had been different—if they were not happy to let you choose as you wish—then they would have intervened and imposed a hindrance.

With these questions in focus, we can see that different analytical and allocative interpretations of the concept of freedom become readily identifiable. There are so many different conceptual commitments associated with talk of freedom that we have a choice about which to ratify in analysis and about which property to allocate to the concept. These internal grounds for why philosophy has a license in the theorizing about freedom have been fully exploited in the tradition, giving us different ways of thinking about the topic. These all begin from different analyses of what counts as enjoying freedom and go on to offer different accounts of what constitutes it.

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[21]   An action will be intentional insofar as it is generated appropriately by the agent's beliefs and desires; it will be voluntary, as suggested in the previous footnote, insofar as it is chosen in the presence of acceptable, or at least apparently acceptable, alternatives.

Thus, to take the sort of view associated broadly with Thomas Hobbes (1994a,b), he answers the questions as follows: yes, only prevention takes away freedom; yes, it has to be from outside; no, the hindrance does not have to be intentional; but yes, the hindrance must affect the actual option preferred; and yes, if another person is involved, they have to intervene as a matter of actual fact (Pettit 2008).

The sort of view associated with Isaiah Berlin (1969) breaks from Hobbes on the first, the third, and the fourth questions (Pettit 2011). He holds that, no, the hindrance that reduces freedom does not have to be preventive; yes, it has to be imposed from without; yes, only an intentional, perhaps only a voluntary intervention can reduce it; no, it may reduce freedom even when it affects an option you didn't actually prefer; but yes, if another person is involved, he or she has to intervene as a matter of actual fact.

What has come to be known as the republican view of freedom represents a salient alternative to these two.[22] It coincides with the Berlinian view on the first four issues. The intervention that reduces freedom, as Berlin holds, may extend beyond preventive hindrance; it must be imposed from without; it must originate in voluntary intervention; and it may reduce freedom by affecting any option in the relevant choice, whether or not it is actually preferred. But, as against Berlin, it holds that it is enough for suffering a reduction of freedom that someone who actually fails to intervene, would have done so, had they wished: they have the power required.

It is implausible to hold that any of these analyses of the concept of freedom in choice is clearly mistaken about the commitments associated with the term; they each take a permissible direction in selecting the commitments to ratify. Drawing on different analyses of freedom, they offer different accounts of the property that constitutes it. What constitutes it in the Hobbesian case, in more or less established language, is the property of non-frustration; in the Berlinian, the property of non-interference; and in the republican, the property of non-domination.

As I have argued elsewhere, the selection of which theory to endorse has to be made on independent, non-analytical grounds (Pettit 2014). The grounds, plausibly, are that the theory preferred satisfies the test of reflective equilibrium better than the alternatives; it helps to shape an overall political philosophy whose verdicts on particular issues, perhaps after some adjustments, constitute judgments that we are disposed on consideration to endorse. These are grounds of the sort that Rawls (1971) explicitly invokes in favor of his own two-principles theory of justice; indeed it is he who introduces the idea of a methodology of reflective equilibrium. [23]

[22] The republican literature is now voluminous. For my own contribution, see (Pettit 1997, 2012b, 2014). For monographs in English, see (Skinner 1998; Brugger 1999; Halldenius 2001; Honohan 2002; Viroli 2002; Maynor 2003; Lovett 2010; Marti and Pettit 2010; MacGilvray 2011; Gourevitch 2014; Taylor 2017; Thomas 2017). And for collections, see (Van Gelderen and Skinner 2002; Weinstock and Nadeau 2004; Honohan and Jennings 2006; Laborde and Maynor 2007; Besson and Marti 2008; Niederbeger and Schink 2012). For a recent review of work in the tradition, see (Lovett and Pettit 2009).

[23] The freedom example illustrates nicely the approach that has come to be described as conceptual ethics (Burgess and Plunkett 2013a,b; Plunkett and Sundell 2013). In terms of that approach, the issue in this case is whether to take the concept of freedom—the best concept, by relevant criteria—to be one that ratifies this or that set of answers to the five questions. The idea is that the analysis of the term 'freedom'

What holds of freedom holds of at least many of the topics that philosophy seeks to illuminate. Whether in providing an account of agency or action, belief or intention, causation, freewill, or value, philosophy does not advance by a consideration of conceptual connotations alone. It may start in any single case from an analysis of such connotations, seeking to satisfy them in some measure. But that starting point leaves it with the main work still to do: providing a constitutive account of the sort of phenomenon the concept targets; in particular, a constitutive account that makes it worthy of a place in the relevant background theory.

Acknowledgements

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directs us to different candidate concepts and the issue in philosophy, essentially normative in character, is to decide which concept the term should be taken to express. While the approach uses the word 'concept' where this chapter would speak of a concept-referent pairing, the difference is not significant and the line taken in this chapter offers support for conceptual ethics.

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