

THE CONCEPTUAL MAP SOLUTION TO THE PARADOX OF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract.

Why do a conceptual analysis on a word that we already know how to use? Marilyn Strathern provides some information on garden cities and suburbs which suggests a novel solution to me.

The paradox of analysis is this: an analysis of a word or concept provides a definition; an analysis must be informative to be of value; but a sound analysis of a word we already know how to use or a concept we already have is not going to be informative, because we already know how to use it (Hart 1985: 156; Balaguer and Horgan 2016). I wish to present a solution to this paradox, which occurred to me while reading Marilyn Strathern's book *After Nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century*. It involves rejecting the middle component of the paradox: an analysis must be informative to be of value.

Strathern writes:

The Garden Suburb had sprung in the wake of the garden city movement of the 1900s. One visionary model of the garden city, in the words of Ebenezer Howard, rested on making the distinction between town and country quite explicit: 'Town and country must be married and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life and a new civilization'; it was to be a marriage 'of rustic health and sanity [and] of urban knowledge and urban technical facility, urban political co-operation' (quoted by Thorns 1973: 17). (1992: 34)

Garden city, garden suburb: is there a difference? We know how to use the words "town" and "country" but we don't know how to use these terms for hybrid entities. What someone might do is analyse the terms we know and build a conceptual map. Town has qualities T1, T2, and T3, say (evident from semantic analysis alone, let's suppose); country has qualities C1, C2, and C3. The garden suburb has qualities T1, C2, and C3. The garden city has qualities T1, T2, and C3. And there are other hybrid entities. Even if the analyses of "town" and "country" are uninformative, they are valuable as part of developing a map, which depicts the various hybrid concepts and what they are taking from the metaphorical parents and thereby how they contrast with each other.

References

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- [3].Strathern, M. 1992. *After nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.