

n -Dimensionalism

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1. The illusion of contingency

Kripke: mere epistemic possibility

Given our evidence before the investigation of water, it could have turned out that water is not H₂O.

Given our present evidence, it could not have.

Chalmers: systematic reinterpretation

The secondary intension of “water is H₂O” is the space of all worlds. But its primary intension is not.

D-argument against type B materialism

Physical facts do not a priori entail the phenomenal truths.

Since S is a posteriori, S has a contingent primary intension.

If type B materialism is true, the physical facts necessitate all truths.

Step: Conceivability (4) implies possibility (5)

There is a P -world considered as actual where Q is false.

There is a P -world where $[Q]_1$ is false.

“Watery stuff”

Kripke’s use of “watery stuff” :

What we know of water before finding out that it is H₂O.

Chalmers’ use of “watery stuff” :

What captures the sense in which “water is H₂O” ever will be a posteriori.

“Water” and “watery stuff” are conceptually equivalent iff the following bridge principle is a priori:

(6) Water is watery stuff.

3. A Dilemma for Chalmers

If primary intensions are to do their work, they have to be - at least in principle - expressible.

But: There is no X such that “ X is H_2O ” is a posteriori and “ X is water” is a priori.

First horn: If (6) is of the form

(7) D that(watery stuff) is watery stuff.

then it is a priori in the same sense in which “Water is H_2O ” is a priori.

Second horn: If (6) is of the form

(8) \ddagger (watery stuff) is watery stuff.

then it is a posteriori in the same sense in which “Water is H_2O ” is a posteriori.

To convince ourselves that “water is watery stuff” is a priori we have to assume that it is true.

4. The first horn

(9) Julius invented the zip.

By

“Let “Julius” denote the inventor of the zip, whoever he is”

either

we exclude worlds w such that the inventor of the zip in w is not called “Julius” in w

or

we exclude worlds w such that the inventor of the zip in w *would* not be called “Julius” by us (by stipulating a two-dimensional intension or by ‘keeping the language fixed’)

What is a priori, is not (9) but rather

(10) If “Julius” denotes the inventor of the zip,
then Julius invented the zip.

But this is trivial.

5. The second horn

“ $\phi(\ddagger(\text{the } \phi))$ ” (“whatever is ϕ is ϕ ”) is a truth of logic and can thus plausibly be taken to be a priori.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-----|-----|
| “water” | H ₂ O | H ₂ O | H ₂ O | “watery stuff” | H ₂ O | XYZ | ABC |
| | XYZ | XYZ | XYZ | | H ₂ O | XYZ | ABC |
| | ABC | ABC | ABC | | H ₂ O | XYZ | ABC |

We have water = $\ddagger(\text{water})$ and watery stuff = $\dagger(\text{water})$.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| “water” | H ₂ O | H ₂ O | H ₂ O | “watery stuff” | H ₂ O | XYZ | ABC |
| | XYZ ₁ | XYZ ₁ | XYZ ₁ | | H ₂ O ₁ | XYZ ₁ | ABC ₁ |
| | ABC ₂ | ABC ₂ | ABC ₂ | | H ₂ O ₂ | XYZ ₂ | ABC ₂ |

If we assume that XYZ = XYZ₁ and ABC = ABC₂, we have water = $\ddagger(\text{watery stuff})$.

| | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| $\dagger(\text{watery stuff}) = \dagger\dagger(\text{water})$ | H ₂ O | XYZ ₁ | ABC ₂ |
| | H ₂ O | XYZ ₁ | ABC ₂ |
| | H ₂ O | XYZ ₁ | ABC ₂ |

We lost $\dagger(\text{watery stuff}) = \text{watery stuff}$.

Apriority lost

(11) $\mathcal{F}A(\text{Water is watery stuff})$

where $\mathcal{F}A$ (“fixedly actual”) is defined as

$$\mathcal{M} \models_y^x \mathcal{F}A\alpha \Leftrightarrow \forall y \mathcal{M} \models_y^y \alpha$$

and where “ $\models_y^x \alpha$ ” means “ α , as evaluated in y , is true of x ”.

(12) $\Box \dagger (\text{water} = \dagger(\text{water}))$

(13) $\Box(\dagger(\text{water}) = \dagger \dagger (\text{water}))$

Another argument

- Suppose watery stuff in w is not H_2O , but XYZ, but they use “water” to refer to H_2O .
- They consider v as actual where H_2O is not watery.
- v is a world, considered as actual by the inhabitants of w , where the substance they call “water” is not watery.
- It is not, however, a world where what we call “water” is not watery.
- Whether or not we can conceive of a world as actual where water is not watery depends on whether we can distinguish between us and them and so whether it is XYZ or H_2O that is watery.
- So it is not a priori that “water is watery stuff” is a priori.

6. Morals

We cannot but evaluate *what we believe are the primary intensions of our words*.

The “conditional knowledge argument”:

“Given that we have the ability to know what our concepts refer to when we know how the actual world turns out, then we have the ability to know what our concepts would refer to *if* the actual world turned out in various ways.” (CM 59-60)

A disanalogy:

(14) If p is true, p is necessarily true.

(15) If p is true, p is a priori.

7. *n*-Dimensionalism

How to get as many dimensions as you like:

- Keep track of your commitments.
- Imagine having other concepts than you have.
- Do not rigidify automatically.
- Have a functor $[\dots]_1$ mapping expressions to primary intensions in the object language.
- Apply the “conceivability implies possibility” thesis recursively.
- Let the monsters in.
- Avoid strong necessities.
- Generalize the dagger.
- Think about brains in a vat.
- Distinguish different grades of keeping the language fixed.