

ARE ALL NECESSARY PROPOSITIONS ANALYTIC?

THE TITLE QUESTION of this paper admits of two different interpretations. It might be a question like "Are all swans white?" or it might be a question like "Are all statements of probability statistical statements?" "Are all causal statements, statements of regular sequence?" etc. If these two types of questions were contrasted with each other by calling the former "empirical" and the latter "philosophical," little light would be shed on the distinction, since what is to be understood by a "philosophical" question is extremely controversial. Perhaps the following is a clearer way of describing the essential difference: the concept "swan" is on about the same level of clarity or exactness as the concept "white," and one can easily decide whether the subject-concept is applicable in a given case *independently* of knowing whether the predicated concept applies. On the other hand, the second class of questions might be called questions of logical analysis, i.e., the predicated concept is supposed to *clarify* the subject-concept. They can thus be interpreted as questions concerning the adequacy of a proposed analysis (frequency theory of probability, regularity theory of causation); and the very form of the question indicates that the suggested analysis will not be accepted as adequate unless it fits all uses of the analyzed concept. Now, when I ask, as several philosophers before me have asked, whether all necessary propositions are analytic, I mean to ask just this sort of a question. I assume that those who, with no hesitation at all, give an affirmative answer to the question, consider their statement as a clarification of a somewhat inexact concept of traditional philosophy, viz., the concept of a necessary truth, by means of a clearer concept. I feel, however, that little will be gained by the substitution of the term "analytic" for the term "necessary," unless the former term is used more clearly and more consistently than it seems to me to be used in many contemporary discussions. And I