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Analysis, directional in Susan Stebbing (1885–1943)

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Stebbing's preferred view of analysis, and the view of analysis she thinks is best suited to philosophy, is directional analysis. She lays out the presuppositions of directional analysis in Stebbing (1932). Directional analysis starts with common sense things, the things we have immediate access to and immediate knowledge of in the world, and proceeds to dig deeper and gain a more in depth understanding of those things. This is a distinct difference from the types of analysis done by John McTaggart and the Logical Positivists, claims Stebbing, who first start with definitions and then turn to the world.

Some notable presuppositions of directional analysis are:

“The logical presupposition: If p is to be analyzed, then p must be understood. It follows that there is at least one expression which unambiguously expresses p .”

“The metaphysical presuppositions:

- If p is to be analyzed, then it is not always the case that p is known to be false, and it is sometimes the case that p is known to be true.

- Directional analysis is possible.

- There is a way of analyzing p such that we can correctly speak of the analysis of p . This assumption is equivalent to the assertion that we must be able to say ‘There is one and only one analysis of p , and *this* is that analysis.’” (Stebbing 1932, p 85).

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