

Introduction

In this book, I define the concepts of 'description' and 'prescription' and argue that a 'description' can be knowable, while a 'prescription' is not knowable. These terms are found in natural languages and can be defined as follows:

A '**description**' is an assertion that purports to express a *correspondence* (or a representation) of some state of affairs, where its correctness (or incorrectness) is independent of its acceptance (or non-acceptance) by particular persons.

A '**prescription**' is an assertion that purports to express a *stipulation* (or rule) upon a practice, where its correctness (or incorrectness) is dependent upon its acceptance (or non-acceptance) by particular persons.

Throughout this book, we will use 'conceptual analysis' to investigate important philosophical concepts. A *conceptual analysis methodology* is the practice of analyzing terms and concepts (e.g., 'knowledge,' 'justification,' 'truth,' 'existence,' 'necessity,' 'definition,' 'concept,' 'axiom,' 'art,' 'goodness') by closely examining and describing their normal use and the intentions behind them.

The notion of a 'description' is familiar. A description is *true* or *false*. A proposition *p* is *true* if it corresponds to a state of affairs (i.e., the facts) and a proposition *p* is *false* if it isn't factual (i.e., expressing something that is *not* the case).

But what is a 'prescription?' This question draws us into questions about language, epistemology, metaethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mathematics and logic. I argue that the following are *prescriptions*: (1) the axioms, vocabulary, grammar, and inference rules of formal deductive systems,¹ (2) 'sufficient evidence' claims in epistemology, (3) stipulative definitions, and (4) normative ethical assertions. None of these kinds of assertions is capable of objective truth or falsity. Their 'correctness' depends on personal agreement. This is a radical thesis, and as indicated, we will need to investigate a number of philosophical topics in order to defend this descriptive-prescriptive hypothesis.

¹ That the axioms of formal languages are 'prescriptions' is surprising to some philosophers. It is widely believed that the axiom(s) underlying the principles of deduction are necessary *a priori* truths. On the contrary, e.g., the identity axiom (i.e., every *x* is necessarily identical with itself) is understood here as an implicit definition of how the word 'identity' is to be used in a formal deductive system. The 'identity axiom' is a prescriptive proposition, and is neither true nor false, much less 'necessarily true.' The *a priori* – *a posteriori* distinction is a major philosophical mistake, but it is still embraced by many philosophers.

Chapter One: A Predominately Externalist Definition of Knowledge

What is 'knowledge?' Until the appearance of a short journal article written by Edmund Gettier (1963) it was taken for granted that 'knowledge' is definable as 'justified true belief' (JTB).² With counterexamples presented by Gettier and Gilbert Harman (1973), it was shown that this justified true belief (JTB) definition cannot be correct. These authors' counterexamples show that there are imaginable epistemic situations where all three of these conditions are satisfied but we wouldn't say that 'S knows p.'

A satisfactory response to these two kinds of counterexamples has proven difficult. From the mid-1960's until the early 1980's there were innumerable attempts to modify the traditional definition, often with the addition of a fourth condition (e.g., no-defeaters) for describing what knowledge is. But in attempting to describe the necessary and sufficient conditions under which S knows p, it was found that the newly formulated conditions were always susceptible to further counterexamples. In *The Analysis of Knowledge* (1983), Robert K. Shope surveyed the literature, including many definitions and their counterexamples, and concluded that a necessary and sufficient conditions approach to knowledge wasn't likely to be successful. Analyses that attempted to describe the conditions for knowledge just led to conflicting intuitions and endless details. Few serious attempts to revise the definition of knowledge have occurred since.

Besides these discouraging results, there were strong positive reasons for abandoning a 'conceptual analysis' of knowledge. In his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests that a definition of 'knowledge' cannot be specified because the concept of knowledge has no definite boundaries or conditions. It is a mistake to think that there are necessary and sufficient conditions to describe when knowledge is properly asserted or obtained. What counts as knowledge varies upon context, and there can be no independent conditions that define when 'S knows p.'³

² The JTB definition of knowledge is: 'S knows p' if and only if: (1) p is true. (2) S believes p, and (3) S is justified (i.e., has strong evidence, reasons) for believing p.

³ Wittgenstein compares 'knowledge' with the concept of a 'game.' He maintains that the term 'game' which includes board games, card games, ball games, Olympic Games, and so on, is a concept where there is no common element to all of these activities, but they are all referred to as 'games.' There is no necessary and sufficient conditions definition of 'game' to be formulated. Analogously, there is not a single definition of 'knowledge.' Our ordinary language grammar determines what counts as a 'game' or 'knowledge.'

A third reason why the definitional analysis of knowledge has been abandoned is that many philosophers have favored a radical 'naturalized epistemology' as proposed by WVO Quine (1969). These philosophers, including reliabilists, believe instantiations of knowledge occur when sentient beings form true beliefs about their external world as the result of natural truth-connecting belief processes. The possession of knowledge just is a physical 'state of being' that is better explained by cognitive scientists, than philosophers.

A fourth reason why philosophers have parted interest in seeking a definition of knowledge, is that many instead prefer to investigate its 'value.' Edward Craig (1990) seeks the *value* of knowledge.⁴ Similarly, Ernest Sosa (1991) has adopted an influential 'virtue epistemology' which emphasizes the role of 'intellectual virtues' (e.g., attentiveness to evidence, being critical, open-minded, impartial, using clear reasoning) as a way for S to possess a truth-conducive justification. Alvin Goldman (1999) moved from a causal definition of knowledge to interests in 'social epistemology.' Duncan Prichard (2005, 2009, 2019) favors an anti-luck virtue epistemology with the metaphysics of 'possible worlds' and 'safety.' John Greco (2002, 2010, 2019) is also a virtue epistemologist.

A fifth reason is Linda Zagzebski's (1994) argument that no necessary and sufficient conditions approach will generate conditions where it is *guaranteed* that S knows p. Also, the no-defeaters condition has been attacked many times during the past decades, e.g., Max Baker-Hytch and Matthew Benton 'Defeatism Defeated' (2015).

A sixth reason is Timothy Williamson's (2007) influential proposal of a 'knowledge first' theory where the distinction between 'knowledge' and 'ignorance' is suggested as the starting point to study cognitive matters, not requiring a definition of knowledge. Williamson further seeks to extend the precise (scientific) method of mathematics into philosophy. An investigation of 'metaphysical modality' as a mode of philosophical inquiry is favored. Williamson states that "Philosophy can never be reduced to mathematics. But we can often produce mathematical models of fragments of philosophy, and when we can, we should" (p. 291). Another philosopher endorsing

⁴ Craig seeks to describe *the role* the concept plays in our life and the conditions governing its application (p. 2). Craig says, "Knowledge is not a given phenomenon, but something we delineate by operating with a concept which we create in answer to certain needs, or in pursuit of certain ideals" (p. 3). Michael Hannon (2019) agrees, saying that we speak of "knowing" in order to provide good sources of information (p. 2).

Williamson's worldview is Hannes Leitgeb. He is the editor of the epistemology journal *Erkenntnis* and states on his webpage that he is "very much in favor of Mathematical or Formal Philosophy, i.e., the application of logical and mathematical methods in philosophy." He says that "to make progress in philosophy, the use of mathematical methods is of crucial importance." The mathematization of epistemology is very popular.

A seventh reason is the apparent failure of Gettier progress in *Explaining Knowledge* (Borges, et. al. 2017) with expert essays. But in response, the necessary and sufficient conditions analysis of 'knowledge' proposed here describes the conditions for *how* and *when* 'S knows p.' Knowledge is analyzed as a 'natural kind' entity (i.e., having unity, discreteness, and essentiality). The definition simply seeks to show how ordinary knowledge is *possible*. The definition *isn't* trying to prove that knowledge exists. It *explains* the Gettier problem and other epistemic problems, but *isn't* adding conditions with the intent to evade (or resist) Gettier situations, and *guarantee* that S knows p. The theory hypothesized here isn't skepticism-proof, but if knowledge exists, then these are its four necessary and sufficient conditions. A PE definition replaces the JTB definition.

Chapter Two: A Response to Radical Skepticism

Chapter two addresses the problem of radical skepticism. Radical skepticism involves both a 'skeptical hypothesis' and a 'skeptical argument.' The skeptic posits the 'skeptical hypothesis' in a deductive argument which is premise #1 below. The 'skeptical argument' makes self-reference to 'I' assuming a single conscious thinker, and 'o' which designates an ordinary proposition (e.g., I have two hands):

(#1) I do not know that 'I am not a brain-in-a-vat.' (Skeptical hypothesis)

(#2) If I do not know that 'I am not a brain-in-a-vat,' then I do not know o.

(#3) Therefore I do not know o.

In the #2 premise, it is asserted that if I cannot know that this skeptical hypothesis is false, then I cannot know any ordinary proposition o. The skeptic argues if I do not know that I am not a BIV, then I cannot assert that I know o, because this unresolved premise that 'I don't know that I'm not a BIV' undermines any claims to knowledge. After all, if you don't even know that you're not a BIV, how can you claim to know anything else?

My response to this issue is similar to that of Fred Dretske (1970) and Robert Nozick (1981) who argued that we do not need to know the skeptical hypothesis is false in order to have knowledge of everyday propositions. I argue that premise #2 (i.e., the epistemic closure principle) is *false*, so it cannot serve as the basis for the conclusion that knowledge of ordinary propositions is impossible. The skeptic's argument is unsound.

Chapter Three: A Contextualist Theory of Justified Personal Belief

The third topic of discussion in epistemology concerns 'personal justification' and the 'regress of reasons' problem. A regress of reasons is a case where a skeptical inquisitor makes unceasing demands for additional justificatory reasons (for any premise that you offer to support a belief). Louis Pojman (1995a, p. 94) provides an example:

Suppose that you believe that 'eating vegetables will promote your health.' I ask you why you believe that? You answer that your belief is based upon your beliefs about nutrition. Vegetables have the kind of vitamins necessary for the proper maintenance of the human body. But suppose I ask you why you believe that vegetables contain the kind of vitamins necessary for the nutrition of the human body? Well, you'd appeal to 'common knowledge' or start discussing chemistry and physiology. Where would the demand for justification stop?

The skeptical inquisitor always asks for additional reasons for why you believe a proposition **p** (e.g., 'eating vegetables promotes my health.'). When is one's evidence 'sufficient' to rule-out the existence of potentially defeating facts? What stops a skeptical regress (in a demand for reasons to support a belief and the beliefs that support it)?

With respect to these issues, I endorse a local-contextual theory of justification similar to that of David Annis (1978), Michael Williams (2001), and Adam Leite (2005). A regress of reasons ends when **S1** (or an objector group) agrees that **p** is probably true, and **S** is not required to provide further premises or arguments in defense of **p**. Not only must **S** and an objector group **S1** believe that **S** possesses knowledge (i.e., having relevant premises, with no defeating facts); *they* must also *agree* to the sufficiency of **S**'s evidence, in order to halt a regress. This theory solves (or explains) the regress problem by describing its 'prescriptive' basis against 'foundationalism' and 'coherentism.'

Chapter Four: A Response to Hume's Problem of Induction

Chapter four concerns the problem that there are no non-circular arguments to establish that induction is a reliable mode of reason for predicting the future. David Hume in *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) argues that we cannot know that 'induction is a reliable method of inference' or that 'the future will resemble the past.' Hume maintains that in order to have a 'justified belief' that induction is a reliable method of inference; one must possess either a sound deductive argument or a non-circular inductive argument in support of induction. Hume argues that neither kind of argument is available. With no justification, Hume claims that the common belief that 'induction is reliable' is not justifiable. Hume freely admits that we are 'personally justified' in using induction for obtaining new beliefs; but claims that we cannot have relevant premises for believing and knowing that induction will remain a reliable mode of reasoning. As a result, the whole of empirical science rests upon an unjustified belief about the reliability of induction.

This is an unsettling result (for philosophers) but this conclusion is not really a problem, but it is a *fact* in need of an explanation. It is a fact that we *do not* have relevant (truth-connecting) premises for believing that induction will remain a reliable mode of reasoning, and that the future will resemble the past. But it is recognized that the inductive method is 'acceptable to everyone' because we have no reservations about making inductive inferences, and there is seemingly no undermining evidence or serious alternatives that would count against induction. Induction is *adopted*, but *not known true*.

Chapter Five: A Theory of Metaethical Prescriptivism

Chapter five is about the 'meaning' and 'truth value' of ethical assertions. Ethical assertions are those directives that say what persons 'ought' to do. I maintain that all ethical assertions should be understood as 'prescriptive' in epistemology:

Prescriptivism: Ethical assertions and substantive value affirmations are prescriptions. The 'correctness' of any value affirmation or ethical assertion is dependent upon what persons accept, tolerate, or agree-to, and does not refer to an objective moral reality.

The descriptive-prescriptive distinction provides a positive characterization of how morality and moral language works. Prescriptivism maintains that ethical assertions may be approved (or disapproved) by humans, but that they are neither true nor false. Any argument with an ethical 'ought' conclusion is always deduced from premises that contain at least one prescribed value or prescriptive 'ought' premise.

Chapter Six: A Theory of Definition & Concepts

In chapter six, a thesis about language is introduced that focuses on the concept of 'definition.' Discussions in the philosophy of language virtually ignore this topic. I rectify this omission by hypothesizing that there are three kinds of definitions: reportive, theoretic, and stipulative. If true, we should be able to classify (upon the intent of the speaker) any definiendum-to-definiens relationship as being one of these three kinds:

- 1) A **'reportive definition'** (or 'lexical definition,' 'nominal definition') reports or describes the generally accepted or community equivalence between a definiendum and a definiens.
- 2) A **'theoretic definition'** (or 'real definition,' 'natural definition') affirms the standard equivalence between a definiendum and a definiens; but attempts to analyze the 'nature' or 'associated material conditions' of an entity.
- 3) A **'stipulative definition'** introduces a specialized definiens for a definiendum the following contexts: (a) the initial naming of an entity where the entity is newly-discovered, newly-introduced, newly-created, or newly-renamed or (b) in the notational abbreviation of one linguistic expression for another (meaningful) linguistic expression, or (c) a precise formalization where a reportive definiendum-to-definiens relation is generally affirmed but a definiens alteration is proposed for pragmatic, technical, or personal reasons.

If this theory is false, it could be disproved by counterexamples. The challenge to anyone skeptical of this definition, is to provide a single counterexample.

The second portion of this chapter asks what are 'concepts' and what kinds of concepts are there? In reviewing the literature involving 'concepts' there seems to be distinctions between six kinds of key concepts: (1) natural kind concepts, (2) group

resemblance concepts, (3) fixed definiens concepts, (4) fictional entity concepts, (5) definite description concepts, and (6) proper name concepts. The recent explicit scientific and philosophical study of 'concepts' was triggered by Rosch and Mervis (1975), Smith and Medin (1981), and by Laurence and Margolis (1999) among others.

Chapter Seven: How Can We Know Mathematical Truths?

This chapter provides an explanation of where 'mathematical truth' fits in among our thoughts. I argue that definitions found in the deductive sciences are stipulative (and prescriptive) and that the 'axioms' and 'inference rules' that make up formal deductive systems are prescriptive. 'Game formalism' is endorsed where mathematical 'truths' are understood as a consistent manipulation of rules in a formal system. Mathematical knowledge is similar to knowing the rules of a game, and then following those rules. In an interpreted formal system, logical-mathematical entities have no independent objective existence, but are stipulated to exist (i.e., invented) using definitions with a fixed definiens. Speakers do not *refer* to points, circles, numbers, and ratios as existing *objective* unified entities when talking about them; instead, speakers *use* these mathematical terms consistent with stipulated definitions. I advocate 'anti-realism' (in ontology) because it denies the existence of independent objective mathematical entities.

Chapter Eight: How Can Aesthetic Judgments Be True or False?

The 'subjectivity' of aesthetic value and 'truths' of aesthetic judgment are discussed. I argue that aesthetic judgments are reports about the relationship between a perceiver and an aesthetic item. Aesthetic judgments are true or false in that they are descriptions of actual subjective preferences, but there is no independent natural order that makes one person's aesthetic interests and preferences better than that of another. An aesthetic evaluation (i.e., judgment, assertion) is intended to *describe* what aesthetic items a person genuinely enjoys (or dislikes). Persons can know what aesthetic items (truly) please them, and recommendations may follow, where it is *prescribed* that an item is worth experiencing (or not) to those who have similar interests.

Chapter Nine: The Methodology of Analytic Philosophy

In this chapter, I defend the use of 'intuitions,' 'conceptual analysis,' and 'thought experiments' as being crucial to a social scientific linguistic philosophy. An 'intuition' is a belief that we are pre-theoretically (or post-theoretically) committed to or are inclined to believe. It is a report of 'what we would say' if asked our gut-level opinion about the correct answer to given question. An intuitive belief can be a 'seems to be the case' and unreflectively tentative; or an intuitive belief can be strongly held (but not infallible).

This chapter recognizes a distinction between *world-view intuitions* and *linguistic intuitions* as beliefs that motivate conceptual analyses. I argue that since a theory cannot be constructed solely out of unbiased and neutral world-view intuitions, the analytic philosopher must provide a theory with hypotheses and examples that provide reasons to believe that a worldview is true (in a given domain). The theory that mediates between 'world-view intuitions' (e.g., the acceptance or non-acceptance of theism, naturalism, possible-worlds realism, etc.) and 'linguistic intuitions' involves beliefs about the use of particular 'concepts' and is subject to debate as true or false. A person's having a concept of something (vague or detailed) makes one disposed to have beliefs (or intuitions) about the correct application of the concept in various cases.

Conceptual analyses seek to explain philosophically interesting terms by considering normal uses of the words and sentences and the conditions that give them their specific significance (or meaning). To understand the content of certain concepts (and perhaps define them) hypothetical examples may be developed as 'thought experiments' where various outcomes are considered. The mastery of a concept often involves studying its application to difficult and puzzling cases, and abnormal situations.

Chapter Ten: What is Meaning and Reference?

Contemporary formal semantics is understood as the study of the 'meaning' of words and sentences. The primary concepts of semantics are that of meaning, reference, and truth. It is assumed the proper business of a theory of meaning is to specify how language connects with the world and to explain an inherent 'aboutness' of language. Formal theorists want to understand how words (representing different things and having

different functions) can be combined to form well-formed (meaningful) sentences. If the words of a sentence are systematically connected in the right sort of way, then it is plausible that a sentence can have meaning and be either true or false.

In response to this formalized tradition, I ask whether the concepts of 'meaning' and 'reference' should be of primary interest when doing semantics. I scrutinize the principles of linguistic reference and compositionality, and question whether a sentence's meaningfulness is exclusively about its being true or false. A theory of 'speaker reference' is advanced as a contrast to formal theories of 'linguistic reference.' This chapter is of great importance in *challenging* the dominant formal methods approach.

Chapter Eleven: What is a Proposition?

The term 'proposition' has a broad and diverse use in philosophy. Instead of thinking of a 'proposition' as an 'abstract entity,' I believe that this concept can be subject to a conceptual analysis and stipulated with a fixed definiens that is consistent with *most* (not all) core intuitions held by philosophers about what a 'proposition' is. The simplified definition that I propose captures much of the important aspects of its intuitive content: (1) A *proposition* is a complete declarative sentence *asserted in a context* that presents the '*content*' of S's thought. Propositions exist as the 'shared content' of sentences. (2) A proposition is (metaphorically) 'what is said' by a declarative sentence. (3) Different *sentences* may be used to express the *same* proposition (relative to context). (4) *Sentences* (and their corresponding *descriptive propositions*) are *true* or *false* relative to context. But against these philosophical core intuitions about 'propositions' I argue that propositions need not be defined as exclusively truth-apt (i.e., *prescriptive propositions* exist) and I deny that propositions are the 'objects' of 'propositional attitudes.'

Chapter Twelve: Is There Metaphysical Reality and Necessity?

Metaphysics is understood to be the most general of all philosophical and scientific disciplines. It seeks to identify the nature and structure of *all that there is*. Metaphysics is thought to be the conceptually necessary backdrop for every other discipline. Because metaphysics is not an empirical science, and since philosophers don't

appeal to experimental or observational data in support of its claims, metaphysics is traditionally conceived as an *a priori* science. Metaphysical realists maintain that there are objective, truth-evaluable answers to basic questions of ontology (i.e., existence).

As a metaphysical anti-realist, I join other authors in denying that there is a 'metaphysical reality' in any sense. With a skeptical perspective to the notion of metaphysical necessity, I criticize the Kripkean (1980) explanations of the epistemology of 'natural kinds' and 'proper names' in terms of possible worlds.

Chapter Thirteen: A Conceptualist Account of Mathematics

The debate between mathematical realists (platonists) and mathematical anti-realists (nominalists) is examined. A realist believes that: (1) there exist mathematical objects, (2) mathematical objects are 'abstract,' and (3) mathematical objects are independent of our thought, language, and practices. These 'abstract objects' are posited as non-spatiotemporal, nonphysical, unchanging and causally inert. A nominalist, in contrast, maintains that there cannot be objective non-spatiotemporal mathematical 'abstract objects' existing independent of the human mind. The nominalist maintains the 'objects' of mathematics must be explained in some other way, because persons could never have knowledge about objects that don't have a physical location. 'Conceptualism' is advocated here as an alternative anti-realist doctrine. It is argued that 'mathematical entities' are best conceived as concepts in mental systems functionalized in the forms of definitions, vocabulary, syntactic rules, inference rules, and axioms. This allows the inference of formal deductive consequences as entailed by proofs.

Chapter Fourteen: On Why Mathematics is Neither Analytic nor *A Priori*

The ideas that mathematical propositions are semantically 'analytic' or knowable '*a priori*' are scrutinized. 'Analyticity' is described historically and is redefined so as to explain why 'all bachelors are unmarried,' and 'a triangle is three-sided' are true, but otherwise the concept is shown to have very little theoretical value. The concepts of '*a priori* knowledge' and 'possible world semantics' are analyzed. Examples of *a priori* knowledge are identified (e.g., axioms of deductive systems, inference rules, tautologies)

and are alternatively explained without needing the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction. The concepts of '*a priori* knowledge' and 'analyticity' while both theoretically retainable and historically influential, offer little insight into the nature of the discipline of mathematics.

Chapter Fifteen: A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy

A short history of major events in mathematics, logic, and analytic philosophy since 1879 is described. The debate about whether 'formal language' or 'conceptual analysis' is the best way to proceed in addressing philosophical problems is addressed.

Chapter Sixteen: Epistemology Since 1983

With the pursuit of a conditional definition of 'knowledge' abandoned, two alternative approaches to epistemic problems (e.g., skepticism, Gettier cases, lottery situations) distinguished themselves: *epistemic contextualism* and *virtue epistemology*. These two approaches will be examined. Contextualism is a *semantic* theory that is thought to have implications for epistemic questions. Virtue epistemology focuses on the epistemic *evaluation of persons* and their intellectual abilities and character traits. It contends that persons are the primary objects of evaluation, and "intellectual virtue" is more important than 'justification' and 'knowledge,' which are types of belief evaluation.

Chapter Seventeen: A Critique of Prichard's Anti-Luck Virtue Epistemology

Duncan Prichard presents an evolving thread of a metaphysical epistemology that is based upon the broad intuition that "knowledge excludes luck." Prichard seeks to offer an account of 'luck' and a 'safety principle' to address contemporary issues (e.g., skepticism, Gettier cases, lottery situations).

Chapter Eighteen: Williamson's Model-Building Conception of Philosophy

In *Philosophical Method: A Very Short Introduction* (2020), Williamson presents an elementary introduction into his vision of proper methodology for philosophy. In this chapter, we follow Williamson's narrative and critically analyze his claims.

Chapter Nineteen: Descriptions, Prescriptions, & the Limits of Knowledge

The limits of human knowledge are summarized. *Prescriptions* include: (1) stipulative definitions, (2) axioms, vocabulary, syntax, and inference rules in formal deductive systems, (3) 'sufficient evidence' assertions, and (4) ethical assertions. In contrast, *descriptions* include (1) empirical statements, (2) true-in-a-language sentences and applied mathematical-deductive entailments, (3) reportive definitions, (4) theoretic definitions, (5) aesthetic assertions, and (6) social science theories.

This chapter also discusses the problem of the 'irrelevance' of much of contemporary academic philosophy. Mainstream philosophy fails to engage with ordinary people who have an interest in philosophical questions. Instead of seeking technical philosophical 'progress' analogous to the physical sciences, philosophers should emulate the social scientific success of Economics. Economic theories and their university courses are respected as practical and informative. In contrast, philosophers engage in narrow debates among themselves often using stipulative technical definitions. Instead of pursuing prolific writing intended for their peers, philosophers should strive to get the right answers to the basic questions of philosophy and then teach these debatable answers to an interested public, including university students. I provide groups of 28 basic questions that are posed and answered within this book. I contend that all of these questions have definitive answers.

Summary

This book is an extended analysis of how *sentences* are *used* by speakers as either *descriptive* or *prescriptive*, as intended in a context. On the view here, analytic philosophy should be practiced as a social science. Issues should be discussed in terms of theories that explain human intentions, beliefs, and values. Against the recent proliferation of 'possible world' metaphysical and formal semantic theories, it is prescribed here that analytic philosophy should be written with the intent to be relevant and accessible to non-philosophers. Analytic philosophy should address ordinary questions about knowledge, metaethics, mathematics, aesthetics, and language. With the answers to these questions, we can describe the extent and limits of knowledge.