

A Probe into Quine's Holism Epistemology

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Abstract: The distinction between analytic propositions and synthetic propositions is a dogma espoused by logical empiricist. Through the consideration of the synonymy of definition, the interchangeability salva veritate and semantical rules, Quine believed that the analytic concept itself was, needed to be explained, a vague concept. It was difficult to make a distinction between analytic propositions and synthetic propositions. Quine repudiated the dichotomy of analytic propositions and synthetic propositions , which brought about the formation of his holistic Epistemology. Not a complete rejection of empiricism, Holism is a reconstruction of empiricism held by empiricists, resulting in his naturalism monism in methodology.

Keywords Quine , Holism, Epistemology ,Epistemology, Criticism.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of philosophy, Kant first put forward the division of analytic propositions and synthetic propositions. Referring to the meaning of subject and predicate, the truth of analytic propositions can be determined other than judged by the empirical facts. The truth of synthetic proposition can be judged only according to the empirical facts other than the meaning of the subject and predicate words contained in it. The distinction between analytic propositions and synthetic propositions directly reflects Kant's view of knowledge, turning into one of the basic tenets of logical empiricism. In 1950s, through the publication of the two dogmas of empiricism, Quine criticized sharply the two dogmas held by the empiricists, and had a profound influence in the philosophical circle.

THE FORMATION OF A HOLISTIC VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

In the two dogmas of empiricism, through a theoretical attack on the two empiricism dogmas, Quine established holistic view of knowledge. With regard to the critique of empiricism dogmas, Quine lay particular emphasis on the distinction between analytic propositions and synthetic propositions.

A critique of the analytic - synthesized proposition division

Considerations about definition method

Quine's critique of dichotomy between analytic proposition and synthetic proposition is based on analytic concept. Analytic propositions can be divided into logical truth and propositions transformed into logical truth according to synonymy. Logical truth refers to the proposition that the proposition is true according to the meaning of the constituent words, Such as: "no unmarried man is married", this proposition expresses a logical truth. In this way, we can get the truth from the meaning of the proposition. Quine pointed out "a logical truth is such a statement, it is true, and with all the different interpretations ,it is

still true except the logical term in the case of giving it all." [Martinich, 1998] This proposition is a tautology in Wittgenstein's philosophy. For this kind of proposition, We do not need to judge the true or false with the aid of empirical facts other than propositions. Corresponding to it, another kind of logical truth is constructed by the synonymy between the word "unmarried man" and the word "Bachelor", that is, "no bachelor is married".

Quine's critique concentrate mainly on analytic propositions on account of such on analytic propositions depends on the concept of synonymy. Quine deemed that " On account of the description above, we need to rely on a 'synonymy' concept that needs to be explained exactly as analytic itself, We still lack the proper characterization of analyticity for the second kind of analytic proposition." [Martinich, 1998] It seems to Quine that, the same as analytic concepts, the concept of synonymy also need to be explained and illustrated.

Once referring to explanation of synonymy, definition may be frequently called to mind in that the definition method is often recognized as the function of revealing the synonymy between words. Quine deemed "The conceptual studies are concerned with clarifying concepts by defining them, some in terms of others. The doctrinal studies are concerned with establishing laws by proving them, some on the basis of others. Ideally the obscurer concepts would be defined in terms of the clearer ones so as to maximize clarity, and the less obvious laws would be proved from the more obvious ones so as to maximize certainty. Ideally the definitions would generate all the concepts from clear and distinct ideas, and the proofs would generate all the theorems from self-evident truths." [Quine, 1969] Definition can expound some obscure words in order to clarify the meaning of them . In the process of explaining the meaning of obscure words, the synonymy relationship between two words can be established. However, Quine believed that the method of definition was only a report of the synonymy between the explanatory words and the interpreted words, not the creation of

synonyms between words. "Even if the explanation does not purely report the existing synonymy between the defined words and the explanation words, it is still based on other preexisting synonymy." [Quine, 1987] Quine argued that a circular argument error existed in the argument of synonymy between words. In order to ensure the synonymy of words, People use the means of definition. However, the basis of definition is the synonymy between the defined words and the explanation words. Moreover, this kind of synonymous reporting is based on the dictionary editors' daily application of words, which is closely related to the experiential fact. Therefore, the definition can not guarantee the synonymous substitution, without empirical content between words. It is impossible to delimit strict boundaries between the second types of analytic propositions and synthetic propositions. Considerations for the methods of Interchangeability *salva veritate*

The substitution concept of truth preservation originated from the period of Gottfried Wilhelm von. "A natural suggestion, deserving close examination, is that the synonymy of two linguistic forms consists simply in their interchangeability in all contexts without change of truth value; interchangeability, in Leibniz's phrase, *salva veritate*." [Quine, 1951] However, Quine believes that the term "bachelors" and "unmarried men" do not always guarantee the fidelity of substitution in all contexts. In the dubious structure of the reference, the substitution of identity will lose the function of fidelity. The appearance of the word "Bachelor" in this structure is not purely referential. Under this circumstance, the substitution of the term "unmarried man" for "Bachelor" will change the truth of the original proposition. "If we consider these counterexamples, then the substitution of truth preserving value is not a sufficient condition for synonymy." [Chen, 2001] For example, in the proposition that "bachelor is made up of eight English characters", the single quotation mark makes the word "Bachelor" become a bachelor's name. Quine regard this usage mode of the word "Bachelor" as the mention of words rather than the application of words. The application and mention of words are obviously different. The application of words is an application way of reference. The mention of words is an application way of not referring to the reference of words. The mention of words makes the applied words lose their function of pure reference. Apart from the application of quotation marks, dubious structure includes the structure of modal operator contained statements, belief sentence, statements in the form of direct speech.

Quine held that "Interchangeability *salva veritate* is meaningless until relativized to a language whose extent is specified in relevant respects." ^{[4]p29} Preserving truth replacement method, "in the

extension language, the mutual substitution of preservation truth value only guarantees two words have the same extension, but cannot guarantee their extension is the same because of their synonymy." [Chai, 1995] That is to say, in the extension context, preserving truth substitution can guarantee the same extension between the two words, but not guarantee that they have the same meaning. Some philosophers believe that the word "inevitable" can guarantee the great richness of language environment, and can guarantee the analyticity of the propositions behind it. This proposition, "inevitably all and only bachelors are unmarried men" can guarantee the synonymy between bachelors and unmarried men. Quine argued: "our argument is not a straightforward circular argument, but it is analogous to circular argument." The purpose of our argument is to prove the proposition's analyticity through synonymy. The practical effect of the word "necessity" is to ensure the synonymy of words through its presupposition's analyticity

The preservation of true value replacement failure in the dubious context, and can not guarantee that words can replace each other in all context and keep their truth value unchanged. This method can not guarantee the context great richness for the fidelity of substitution. The utilization of the adverb "necessarily" can ensure that the context of the substitution of truth preserving values is greatly enriched, but the application of the "necessarily" contains circular argument. The method of preserving truth value substitution can not successfully pledge the synonym between the substitutes. Therefore, Quine's consideration of the method of preserving the true value substitution shows that it is difficult to get the analytical proposition by the method of synonymous substitution. Such proposition has both the analytical factors of word meaning and the facts of experience. Therefore, it can not be completely translated into analytical proposition, nor can it be completely divided into the comprehensive proposition based on fact. Quine's view on propositions can only be holistic, instead of dividing the proposition into the analytical and the comprehensive view.

Theoretical criticism of the theory of reductionism

The theory of meaning reductionism can be traced back to the basic views of Rock and Hume about perception. In their view, every perception can be derived from the real sense material, and they are based on the real experience materials to form the foundation of concept. Butcher semantic regarded words as the basic units of meaning and naming a perceptual material as the necessary conditions for a word to get its meaning. Frege distinguished the meaning from the reference of the word, and the meaning of a word did not depend on the object what the word referred to. While distinguishing the meaning and reference of a word, Forage believed

that the meaning of a word can only be obtained in a specific sentence. Quine inherited the view of Frege that the basic unit of meaning was the sentence. Quine used sentence as a basic unit of meaning to correct the concept of Frege's semantics, but the practice of taking sentence as the basic unit is still a more refined influence of reductionism. "Logical empiricist believed that any statement or hypothesis of something in the world can be directly or indirectly tested by sentences based on our directly experience and directly observations." [Zhang , 2011] Moreover, every sentence is associated with two kinds of unique sensory events: any occurrence in a sensory event will increase the possibility of the statement; any other event in the sensory event will degrade the possibility of that statement. The Reductionism held by the empiricist is a distortion of the theory on meaning verification, in other words, implied in the theory on meaning verification. The essence of the theory of reductionism is to treat each sentence as an isolation and argued that each sentence can be confirmed or refuted by experience alone. After in-depth study on the theory of meaning verification, Quine found it not only implied reductionism of meaning, but also closely relationship with the doctrine of propositional analytic-synthesized dichotomy. From the perspective of theory of meaning verification ,the so-called analytical propositions are only an extreme case that an extreme case : no matter what happens, the proposition can be verified in fact, verification and this proposition can always be empty and then get the meaning, this proposition is analytic proposition. And this kind of proposition can always be verified by empirical verification and thus obtaining meaning, such a proposition is an analytical proposition.

Quine objection to the view that isolated proposition can be empirically verified. He believed "the statement about the external world is not individual but as a whole, facing empirical court." Quine believes that the truth of the statement is determined by the two aspects : the facts outside the language and the language, which is the evident reality. However, this evident reality does not mean that the truth of a statement can be divided into two elements of fact and language. Dividing a specific statement into a factual component and a language component is incorrect. Moreover, this practice constitutes the root of other wrong practices. "Taken collectively, science has its double dependence upon language and experience; but this duality is not significantly traceable into the statements of science taken one by one." [Quine, 1961] In the logical structure of the world, Carnap skillfully used modern logic method, by defining a large number of concept added senses, to circumvent Hume and Rock's way of tracing the origin of the sense of experience one by one, which is no doubt a great progress. Frege had realized that, in order to criticize the empiricist, we must regard a statement rather than a word as the unit of meaning.

Quine went a step further than Frege, believed that "The unit of empirical significance is the whole of science." Therefore, Quine took a clear-cut stand to show the tendencies of meaning holism. In Quine's view, the so-called knowledge is an organic entirety. In this macrocosm, all kinds of statements relate to each other in a logical way. The most peripheral statements are closely related to experiential facts, and the more the statements inside knowledge is, the more distant the relationship between statements and sensory experience is. In the scope of Quine's holistic epistemology, it is difficult to talk about the empirical content of a single statement. In this case, there is no one-to-one correspondence between most of the sentences and specific experiences within the theoretical system. The door to the theory of holism is opened by animadvert on analytic- synthesized proposition division and the reductionism. Holism is the result of gravely treating the theory of meaning confirmation .

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLISTIC VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

In the whole system of Quine's philosophy, holistic theory of knowledge occupies an important theoretical position and has profound theoretical influence.

A challenge to the correspondence theory of truth and dogmatism

"If the holism is correct, then the theory of truth-conformity should be abandoned, with which any possibility of treating empiricism as a true theory should be renounced." [Peter, 2015] There is no one-to-one correspondence between most of the sentences in the human knowledge system and the specific experience. Only in the broader context that contains them, the theoretical statements are of empirical meaning. Therefore, we can not confirm the specific connection between the internal statements of the knowledge theory and the external experiential facts. However, the theory of truth conformation presupposes the dichotomy between the scientific theory and the external world and regards the consistency between theory and the world as a form of truth. Quine's holistic theory of knowledge tells us that we have no "direct way" into the outer world. We must constantly improve the inherited knowledge system, constantly adjust the relationship between the internal sentences of knowledge system, and connect with the external empirical facts through the sentences at the edge of the theoretical system. We can not verify or refute a statement in a theoretical system with a set of observed or set of empirical evidence. Therefore, Quine's holistic theory of knowledge did not leave the dogmatism and the correspondence theory of truth leeway.

The formation and influence of Naturalism Epistemology

Quine's holistic theory of knowledge has a close relationship with his naturalized epistemology. In the

"naturalized epistemology", Quin points out: "The two basic tenets of empiricism are still nvulnerable, and so far. A creed is: for science, all evidence is sensory evidence, and the other belief is that all impartment concerning the meaning of words must ultimately rely on sensory evidence." [Quine, 2007] It is not difficult to find that Quin's knowledge of words and scientific theories is based on the evidence of sense, and this epistemology is unitary. In the pursuit of truth, Quine gave the following explanation to naturalism epistemology: "To emphasize my dissociation from the Cartesian dream, I have written of neural receptors and their stimulation rather than of sense or sensibilia. I called the pursuit of naturalized epistemology." [Quine, 1992] In the process of studying specific cognition, based on the close relationship between sentence and sensory stimulus, Quine divided sentences into three categories: occasion sentences, observation sentences and fixed sentences. The observation sentence is most closely connected with Quin's monistic epistemology. In "theory and things", Quine pointed out the feature of observation sentence: "When stimulating the speaker's sensory organ in a particular way, he will always agree with the sentence; When stimulating in another way, he will always oppose it. It is in this sense that the relationship between the observation sentence and the sensory stimulation is the most direct." [Chen, 1992] In Quin's description of the observation sentence, we can include that the relationship between observation sentence and sensory stimulation is most closely related. The direct correlation with the sensory stimulation is the most obvious difference between the observation sentence and the other sentences, making the observation sentences a subclass of occasion sentences. In the book "The pursuit of truth", it is pointed out: "therefore, simply speaking, observation sentence is an occasion sentence. According to this occasion, people speaking this language can agree with this sentence immediately." [Quine, 1999]

The observation sentence, having basic relationship with meaning, is the evidence storage of the scientific hypothesis. Observation statements are the first sentences we can learn to understand as children and professional linguists can teach them understood, providing the only way to enter a language. Quin argued that the evidence used as the meaning of observation sentence was observable, and this observability could be shared by different subjects, obtaining agreement among different subjects. The meaning of observation sentence can have both public and definiteness at the same time. Unlike other statements in a scientific theory, the observation sentence can be used as a separate statement to gain experiential meaning. Quin said, "What is more important is that the usual observation sentence is actually a person's response to observation. This is the difference between the observation sentence and the

theoretical sentence." [Quine, 1991] As we all know, after criticizing the doctrine of empiricism, Quine put forward the philosophical thesis of holism. In Quine's view, the Sentence system or scientific theory consisting of many Sentences rather than a single sentence possesses empirical meaning. However, because of the characteristic closely connected with sensory stimuli, observation sentences possess the theoretical characteristic individually tested or refuted by empirical evidence. In this sense, the observation sentence is the minimum unit independently accepted or refuted by empirical confirmation. Quine believed that "the error of observation category can not provide a conclusive refutation. What it retorts is the conjunction of sentences implicating the category of observation. In order to eliminate the conjunction, we don't have to remove this assumption. This is an important insight called holism."

A REFLECTION ON QUIN'S HOLISTIC VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

There are two different philosophical views in the face of Quine's criticism of empiricism dogma. One view is that, Quine's criticism of the analytic - synthesized proposition division is unpertinent. It also confuses the two philosophical categories of analysis and synthesis, transcendentalism and posteriori. The apriori concept in epistemology and the analytical concept in the theory of meaning are two distinct concepts. Another view is that, Quine's criticism of the analytic - synthesized proposition division is inexhaustive in that it only criticizes the propositions in analytical propositions which are translated into analytical propositions by definition. Quine's critique of the distinction between analytical proposition and synthetic proposition proved it difficult to set an obvious dividing line between analytical proposition and synthetic proposition rather than existing obvious dividing line between them. Because there are special types of analytical propositions in the analytical propositions, depending on the synonym between words. Moreover, the concept of synonymy is bound to connect with certain experiential facts. However, as an analytical proposition of logical truth, Quin seldom talks about it far from theoretical criticism. In this sense, Quin's criticism of Propositional Analysis - Comprehensive is in exhaustive. People's recriticism of Quine's criticism did not concentrate on the specific process of Quine's theory criticism but a conclusion of no boundary between analytical proposition and synthetic proposition. Wang Lu pointed out: "the difference between analysis and synthesis is really intuitive. That is to say, this is naturally acceptable." [Wang, 1998] Moreover, some people hold that Quine's criticism of analytical concept is successful. "In this case, Quine's challenge to traditional view is successful. However, the non existence of absolute analyticity does not mean the

strict analytical concept and strict boundary between analytic propositions and synthesized propositions non-existent." [Zhou, 1997]

The evaluation of a theory should not be divorced from the background of the times and the theoretical purpose that the theory is to reach. The logical empiricism was prevail in the epoch of Quine. The logical empiricists take the logical analyzation of the scientific language and refraining from metaphysics as their philosophical mission and task. In the process of logical analysis of the scientific language, the logical empiricist divided the propositions into analytical propositions and comprehensive propositions. Quine criticized the analytical concept in theory, hitting on the hit on the vital part of the theory on propositional division. Although this critique of analyticity concentrated on a subclass of analytic proposition depending on the synonymy between words. In my opinion, this kind of criticism is sufficient for Quine's theoretical purpose: reaching the non-dogmatic empiricism, in other words, the holistic view of knowledge. Quine believed that the theory of science is an inseparable entirety. Furthermore, the internal sentences of the theory are always connected in a particular way. Therefore, the distinction between the analytical proposition and the comprehensive proposition can not be categorically made. Quine demonstrated that the problem of transformation from synonymous words to analytic proposition is actually a theoretical loophole of analytic - synthesized proposition division. The author believes that Quine's criticism of the doctrine of empiricism is be to the point, and it does achieve the theoretical purpose that it needs to achieve. Quine's critique aroused the philosophical debate about propositional theory, which eventually result in the gradual decline of logical empiricism and made the study of metaphysical problem repossess its the deserved position.

CONCLUSIONS

In 20s and 30s twentieth Century, logical empiricism prevailed throughout Europe. The logical empiricist accepted Kant's synthesis - Analysis propositional division and regarded it as a creed . After the study on the analytical concept, Quine believed that analyticity is a vague concept. Therefore, strict distinction between analytic proposition and synthetic proposition could not be made. Quine's holistic view of knowledge actually constitutes a strong critique of proposition analysis and comprehensive division, which has attracted the attention and reflection on proposition in philosophy . Quine's critique of empiricism dogma caused strong

theoretical turbulence in empiricism, which eventually led to the gradual decline of logical positivism in late 1960s. However, it is worth noting that Quine's critique of empiricism dogma is not to completely deny empiricism, but rather to set up a new empiricism without dogma by criticizing empiricism dogmas. This kind of empiricism has its own characteristics. It represents naturalism in epistemology, behaviorism in philosophy of language and holism in philosophy of science. " [Tang, 2011]

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