

Quine: Two Dogmas of Empiricism

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The Two Dogmas



1. Cleavage between Analytic and Synthetic

- Analytic: Grounded in meaning
- Synthetic: Grounded in fact

2. Reductionism

- "Each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience" (Quine 155).
 - Everything can be reduced to sense data
- Objective: Remove Dogmas from Logical Empiricism

Reductionism

- All ideas must be derived from constructs based on immediate (personal) experience
- Carnap's Aufbau - most complete reductionist argument
 - Qualities applied to spatio-temporal point
 - Ex. Quality A is at (x, y, z, t)
 - Problem: 'is at' still not defined -> not fully reduced
- Bigger Point: Two dogmas are the same
 - "The one dogma clearly supports the other in this way: as long as it is taken to be significant in general to speak of the confirmation and infirmation of a statement, it seems significant to speak also of a limiting kind of statement which is vacuously confirmed, ipso facto, come what may; and such a statement is analytic" (Quine 166).
- At very least, Reductionism relies on analytic/synthetic distinction

Analytic vs. Synthetic

- Seems to be **factual** and **linguistic** parts of a sentence
- Ex. 'Taylor Swift dated Joe Jonas'
 - Would be different if the whole thing was a publicity stunt
 - Much different if 'dated' meant 'murdered'



Defining Analyticity

- Quine lists 5 ways people define analyticity
 - Blends metaphysical, epistemological, linguistic
 - Only the last one is accurate
 - Analytic statements are true in virtue of meaning
 - Kant's definition that logical empiricists adopt
- Fits the linguistic and extralinguistic component
- We need to know what is analytically permissible
 - To characterize, we need to know synonymy
 - Basic linguistic rule, also governs self-contradiction

Defining Synonymy

- Quine tries 3 definitions
- Carnap's Meaning Postulates (logic)
 - Make synonymy axioms
 - Problem: Like the sophist in Euthyphro
 - Doesn't state why synonyms are the same
- Dictionary Definition
 - Can just take whatever the dictionary says
 - Problem: Lexicographers are sociologists
 - These are just reports of opinions of synonymous terms
- Interchangeability (*salva veritate*)
 - "A natural suggestion... is that the synonymy of two linguistic forms consists simply in their interchangeability in all contexts without change of truth value" (Quine 159).
 - Bachelor = Unmarried Man

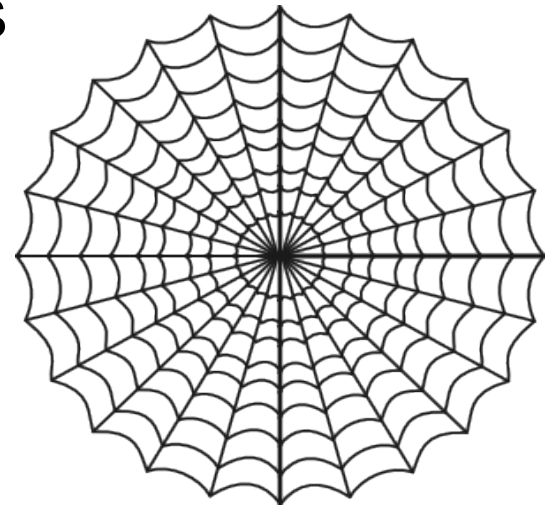
Interchangeability



- Perhaps does not apply to fragments
 - 'Bachelor of Arts'
 - This is silly--can't break apart word
- Using necessity to explain:
 - 1) All and only bachelors are unmarried men
 - 2) Necessarily all and only bachelors are bachelors
 - 3) Necessarily all and only bachelors are unmarried men
- Defines synonymy with another modality - Necessity
 - Still, 3) does not say why 1) is true
 - All of these definitions presuppose analyticity
- Becomes circular in logic
 - We must use synonymy to understand analyticity... but we cannot understand interchangeability without having knowledge of analyticity
 - There must be no analytic/synthetic distinction!

Wholism

- The unit of meaning is all of language/science
 - There aren't meanings for a sentence alone
 - 'That is blue' is nothing without knowledge of 'blue'
- We have to have all of language before we understand
 - Project of reducing to atomic claims misguided
 - We are thrown into the middle of a **web of belief**
- Intent to mean is based upon communication
 - One belief set to another
 - Not interpreted in proposition
 - Interpreted through whole belief systems





Is this good?
What have we accomplished?
What needs to be done?