

INTRODUCTION

2001 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of W. V. Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism". Developing out of intense discussions with Carnap, the paper was first presented in December 1950 at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Toronto. It was published in the *Philosophical Review* in January 1951. Only four months later, first symposia on "Two Dogmas" were held, in Boston and in Stanford.

Some may have missed the anniversary, since the article is usually quoted from its reprint in Quine's *From a Logical Point of View*, which came out in 1953. Thus, even 2003 is a good occasion to celebrate fifty years of "Two Dogmas".

"Two Dogmas" is one of the most influential articles in the history of analytic philosophy. But its influence has not been confined to analytic philosophy. The article does not just question central semantic and epistemological views of logical positivism and early analytic philosophy, it also marks a momentous challenge to the idea that conceptual analysis is a main task of philosophy. The rejection of this idea paved the way for a new conception of philosophy which turned out to be relevant to all branches of Western philosophy. The idea that philosophy is an *a priori* discipline which differs in principle from the empirical sciences dominated early analytic philosophy, but similar views are to be found in the Kantian tradition, in phenomenology and in philosophical hermeneutics. In questioning this consensus from the perspective of a radical empiricism, Quine's article has had a sustained and lasting impact across all these philosophical divisions.

In the wake of "Two Dogmas", and of related early articles by Quine such as "Truth by Convention", most contemporary analytic philosophers assume that it is impossible to draw a clear and sharp distinction between empirical propositions and propositions that are true solely because of their meaning. In the same breath, they often repudiate the distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge. This repudiation also rules out once dominant positions like the linguistic doctrine of necessary truth, according to which the source of such truth lies in language and meaning, and the analytic theory of a priori knowledge,

which explains such knowledge by reference to the analytic nature of its content. Quine himself moves from the abandonment of these distinctions and doctrines to a thoroughgoing naturalism, and many analytic philosophers have followed his lead. They insist that philosophy is part of natural science, or at least continuous with it.

It is beyond dispute that “Two Dogmas” has shaped the philosophical landscape more than any other article of the second half of the twentieth century. The reasons for a philosophical retrospective of fifty years of “Two Dogmas” and its repercussions are not, however, purely or even predominantly historical. For one thing, on closer scrutiny the apparent consensus on what the article has demonstrated proves to be deceptive. Quine employs a number of different formulations of the distinctions he attacks, and he pursues different argumentative strategies in the course of the article. Different suggestions have been made both as to what the overall argumentative dialectic of “Two Dogmas” is and how to evaluate the specific arguments. There does not even seem to be agreement on what the main thesis of the paper is: Does Quine hold that the analytic/synthetic distinction is hopelessly unclear or that there are no analytic statements? Moreover, there is lively controversy on further reaching questions, for instance: How does the rejection of the analytic/synthetic distinction relate to Quine’s equally famous thesis of the indeterminacy of translation? And how does it relate to various kinds of semantic holism?

For another thing, ever since Grice and Strawson there have been notable if sporadic attempts to rehabilitate one or the other dichotomy between the analytic and synthetic, a priori and a posteriori, necessary and contingent, conceptual and factual, philosophical and scientific in the face of Quine’s arguments. In recent years, such attempts have been made with increasing frequency by otherwise diverse figures like Boghossian, Putnam, and followers of Wittgenstein. These writers question either the cogency of Quine’s original arguments, or suggest that there are better ways of drawing these distinctions which are immune to them.

Thirdly, the debate received an important additional stimulus through Kripke’s *Naming and Necessity*, which resuscitates the traditional idea of *de re* necessities and thereby challenges both the Kantian analytic/synthetic distinction and its empiricist debunking. According to Kripkean essentialism, some necessary truths, truths about the essence of things, are discovered *a posteriori* by empirical science. Kripke’s essen-

tialism has forcefully revived the view, rejected by Quine, that necessity is an intrinsic and perhaps *sui generis* feature of reality, rather than a product of our thought and language.

All in all, the time has come to reconsider the semantic, epistemological and methodological questions raised by “Two Dogmas”. The current collection differs from other anthologies devoted to Quine in two respects. On the one hand, it focuses on his attack on analyticity, apriority and necessity; on the other, it considers implications of that attack that far transcend the limits of Quine scholarship, and lie at the heart of the current self-understanding of philosophy. It deals with issues like semantic holism, indeterminacy of translation, recent attempts to rehabilitate the analytic/synthetic distinction and its brethren, the status of philosophy between conceptual analysis, empirical science and essentialist metaphysics, but also with important but hitherto neglected aspects of “Two Dogmas”, such as its treatment of Kant’s notion of analyticity and its consequences in the philosophy of language and the philosophy of mind, such as Davidson’s discussion of its legacy for externalism.

The contributors include both opponents and proponents of the dichotomies attacked by Quine. Furthermore, they include both eminent figures such as Boghossian, Burge, and Davidson, and up and coming younger philosophers. Finally, they combine philosophers from the USA, Germany, Sweden and Britain. The analytic/synthetic distinction was decisively shaped by Germanophone philosophers from Kant to Carnap, and this is reflected by an abiding interest in the Quinean debate among analytic philosophers who read German but publish in English.

The contributions fall roughly into three groups. In the papers of the first group, the case against analyticity is reopened. Paul Boghossian endorses the project of explaining the *a priori* via the notion of meaning. He starts from the notion of *epistemic* analyticity. A sentence is epistemically analytic if grasp of its meaning suffices for justified belief in its truth. In particular, Boghossian defends the idea of implicit definition against objections, and tries to show how facts about meaning can explain entitlements to reason according to certain rules. Kathrin Glüer examines Boghossian’s epistemic version of the analytic theory of *a priori* knowledge, arguing that his implicit definition account of the meaning of the logical constants does not meet the challenge of the classical Quinean criticisms. Verena Mayer traces back the notion of

analyticity from Quine via Carnap to Frege and Kant. She concludes that the so called Frege-Kant notion of analyticity cannot be attributed to Kant, who had a distinctly pragmatic notion of analytic judgements. Christian Nimtz reconsiders and defends Putnam's semantic approach to the problem of analyticity. He develops a semantics within the two-dimensionalist framework which aspires to explain the genesis of analytic truths, or at least of the harmless ones. Åsa Wikforss addresses the question whether Kripke's revival of a non-epistemic, non-linguistic notion of necessity can be taken one step further in order to free *analyticity* from its epistemic ties. She examines Burge's claim that truths of meaning are a posteriori, depending on features of the external environment, and concludes that Kripke's strategy with respect to necessity is not easily transferable to analyticity.

The papers in the second group deal with further issues raised by Quine's paper: with linguistic necessity, synonymy, and logic. Hanjo Glock takes a fresh look at the linguistic doctrine of logical necessity. He argues that a limited version of it is in line with common sense and that it can be defended against standard objections by reconciling Wittgenstein's claim that analytic statements have a normative role with Carnap's claim that they are true. Peter Pagin addresses what Quine called "the problem of synonymy": the problem of approximating the extension of our pretheoretic concept of synonymy by clear and respectable means. He discusses some difficulties for providing a solution and comes to a skeptical conclusion: it could well be the case that the problem of synonymy cannot be solved at all. Tyler Burge considers the place of logic and mathematics in knowledge of the world. Like Quine, he rejects the view that logic is true independently of a subject matter. Developing a route to rationalism and metaphysics that Quine reopened but did not pursue, Burge argues that full reflective understanding of logic and deductive reasoning reveals a priori relations and requires substantial commitment to mathematical entities.

The two remaining papers put "Two Dogmas" in the perspective of Quine's overall philosophy. Geert Keil takes up one of Quine's preferred phrases, "Science itself teaches", and traces it through his writings, trying to find out what exactly the notorious claim amounts to that philosophy is continuous with natural science. He emphasizes that Quine's job description for philosophers has remarkably traditional features, and concludes that Quine's avowed naturalism is more innocuous than it seems. Donald Davidson celebrates Quine's recognition of the fact that

all there is to meaning is what we learn or absorb from observed usage. He argues that this behaviorist approach does not only destroy the myth of meaning, but also entails a powerful form of externalism. According to Davidson, Quine was an externalist from the time of *Word and Object* onwards, despite his reluctance to take the final step from the proximal to the distal stimulus as the relevant cause of a mental state.

With one exception, the essays in this collection were presented at a conference that took place in Berlin, 13.–15. September 2001 under the title “50 Years of Empiricism without Dogmas”. We are grateful to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and to the Humboldt-Universität Berlin for granting the funds that made the conference possible. Herbert Schnädelbach’s paper was delivered as the opening address to that conference. Donald Davidson was prevented from coming to Berlin by the events of September 11; we are grateful to him for nevertheless contributing his paper. Sadly, he will not see the result in print, nor could he proof-read his paper. His sudden death means the loss of one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century. We dedicate our collection to his memory.

The editors