Analyticity and Conceptual Truth

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1 Apriority and Analyticity

The question whether we can have a priori knowledge, and if so to what extent, has lain at the center of philosophy practically since the beginning. For many philosophers, including Plato, Leibniz, Kant, Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein and most of the Logical Positivists, to name just a few, it seems to have been the problem around which everything else was made to turn. It's an interesting question why philosophers have been so obsessed with this problem and why they have been inclined to assign it so much importance. One reason, no doubt, has to do with its relation to the possibility of philosophy itself. Although it has become fashionable in some circles to pretend otherwise, I don't really see that anyone out there has much idea how analytic philosophy is to be done, if not a priori; in particular, I don't really see that anyone has much idea how it is to be done without a hefty helping of a priori conceptual analysis.

The problem, however, has always been to explain how any statement could be known a priori. After all, if a statement is known apriori, then it must be true. And if it is true, then it must be fac-

tual, capable of being true or false. What could possibly entitle us to hold a factual sentence true on a priori grounds?

Traditionally, three classes of statements have been thought, by the friends of the a priori, to be the objects of a priori knowledge: logical statements, exemplified by such truths as:

> Either Brutus killed Caesar or he did not.

Mathematical statements, such as:

> $7 + 5 = 12.$

And 'conceptual' truths, for instance:

> All bachelors are unmarried.

In the history of philosophy in general —and in the history of twen- tieth–century analytic philosophy in particular— one idea about the a priori has been especially important: namely, that statements are knowable a priori because they are 'true by virtue of their mean- ing alone'. This much is familar enough. What appears to be not as well understood, however, is that at least two importantly dis- tinct notions of analyticity have been in play, between which it is very important to distinguish. One of these notions was designed to articulate a sense in which *logic* could count as analytic; and the other which, because it presupposed logic, could not be applied to logic itself, but was rather designed to account for the analyticity of other kinds of sentence. I will call the former notion "pure ana- lyticity" and the latter "impure". Quine himself, analyticity's most influential critic, seems to have been quite clear on the distinction between these two notions, devoting one important paper — "Car- nap and Logical Truth"— to the first, and another —"Two Dogmas of Empiricism"— to the second. Unfortunately, he tended to use the same unmarked word 'analyticity' for both of them, leading many to conflate the two notions, with nothing but confusion as the result.[1]

The impure notion was probably first formulated in full generality by Frege. According to this idea, to say that a statement is analytic is to say that it is transformable into a logical truth by the substi- tution of synonyms for synonyms. Suppose that a given sentence

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[1]Actually, this severely understates the complexity of the situation. Quine's *arguments* in TD leave little doubt that he was concerned exclusively with impure analyticity. However, some of his formulations of the thesis that is supposed to be the target of those arguments occasionally suggest a wider thesis, one that could not possibly be supported by the arguments on offer. I discuss these exegetical matters elsewhere.

S is impurely analytic. How might this fact explain its apriority? Clearly, two further assumptions are needed. First, facts about synonymy must be knowable a priori. Second, the truths of logic must be knowable a priori. Given these two further assumptions, it is easy to see, I think, how a statement's impure analyticity might explain its apriority. For given its impure analyticity, S is transformable into a logical truth by the substitution of synonyms for synonyms. By assumption, facts about synonymy are a priori, so it's a priori that S is so transformable. By further assumption, the sentence into which it is transformable is one whose truth is itself knowable a priori. Hence, S's truth is knowable a priori.

Puting aside for the moment any skepticism about the very existence of statements that are impurely analytic, what class of a priori statement might such a theory fail to explain?

Two classes come to mind. On the one hand, a priori statements that are not transformable into logical truths by the substitution of synonyms for synonyms; and, on the other hand, a priori statements that are trivially so transformable.

Taking the first class first, there appear to be a significant number of a priori statements that are not impurely analytic. For example:

> Whatever is red all over is not blue.

> Whatever is colored is extended.

> If x is warmer than y, then y is not warmer than x.

These statements appear not to be transformable into logical truths by the appropriate substitutions; their ingredient descriptive terms seem not to be decomposable in the appropriate way.

The second class of recalcitrant statements consists of the truths of logic. The truths of logic satisfy, of course, the conditions on impure analyticity. But they satisfy them trivially. And it seems obvious that we can't hope to explain our entitlement to belief in the truths of logic by appealing to their analyticity in this sense: knowledge of impure analyticity presupposes knowledge of logical truth and so can't explain it.

In what, then, could the analyticity of a principle of logic consist, if it is to help with its apriority? If there is anything at all to this idea, it seems it would have to be something along the following lines: the fundamental truths of logic must be analytic in the sense that, mere knowledge of their meaning alone, without knowledge of any other logical truths, suffices for knowledge of their truth.

In some companion pieces, I try to show how such a notion of "pure analyticity" can be deployed to yield a theory of the apriority

of these two classes of statements. In this paper, though, I want to concentrate on the much weaker notion of impure analyticity.

2   "Two Dogmas" and the Rejection of Impure Analyticity

In one of the most celebrated articles of this century, Quine argued that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, no sentence of a natural language could be impurely analytic and, hence, that impure analyticity could not serve to explain the apriority of conceptual sentences. Since he furthermore assumed that impure analyticity was the only serious candidate for explaining the apriority of conceptual truths, he concluded that there could be no such a priori truths.

Notice that on the way I'm reading TD, Quine is proposing to argue against an epistemological thesis —that there are a priori conceptual truths— by arguing against a *semantical* one —that there are impure analyticities, a semantical thesis that he takes to be presupposed by the epistemological thesis. Furthermore, this particular argumentative strategy appears to constitute the *entirety* of Quine's case. Nowhere in TD, anyway, does he provide any reason for doubting either of the other two assumptions that the analytic theory of a priori conceptual truth requires —namely, either the claim that facts about synonymy are a priori, or that logic is. So the success of his case must be judged only by the extent to which he successfully discredits the possibility of impure analyticities.

It has not been sufficiently appreciated, it seems to me, that "Two Dogmas" is *exclusively* concerned with this weaker, impure notion of analyticity, and not at all with the more rarified sense in which logic would have to be analytic. But this is made very clear by Quine:

> Statements which are analytic by general philosophical acclaim are not, indeed, far to seek. They fall into two classes. Those of the first class, which may be called *logically true*, are typified by:
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> (1) No unmarried man is married.
>
> The relevant feature of this example is that it is not merely true as it stands, but remains true under any and all reinterpretations of 'man' and 'married'. If we suppose a prior inventory of *logical* particles... then in general a logical truth is a statement that remains true under all reinterpretations of its components other than the logical particles.
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> But there is also a second class of analytic statements, typified by:
>
> (2) No bachelor is married.

The characteristic of such a statement is that it can be turned into a logical truth by putting synonyms for synonyms (pp. 22-23).

Quine goes on to say very clearly:

> Our problem... is analyticity; and here the major difficulty lies not in the first class of analytic statements, the logical truths, but rather in the second class, which depends on the notion of synonymy (p. 24).

Most of the rest of TD is devoted to arguing that no good sense can be made of such analyticities of the 'second class'.

None of this would make any sense unless Quine were intending in "Two Dogmas" to be restricting himself solely to the impure notion of analyticity. For if he had had the pure notion in mind —the only notion relative to which logic could non-trivially be said to be analytic— he would never have conceded the unproblematic analyticity of logic as he so explicitly does. In fact, it is the whole point of two *other* important papers of his —"Truth by Convention" and "Carnap and Logical Truth"— to argue that there is no non-trivial sense in which logic is analytic, that logic could not be said to be analytic in the pure sense. Relative to the impure notion, however, the logical truths are *trivially* analytic; and so, given his apparent desire to restrict his attention to that notion in TD, he simply concedes their 'analyticity' in the only sense he takes to be under discussion. What he wishes to resist in TD, he takes pains to make clear, is merely the claim that there are any *non-trivial instances of impure analyticity*.

Now, it is probably a bit of an understatement to say that Quine's critique in TD has been widely accepted. It is certainly *very common* to come across references in the literature to a result that is allegedly proven in TD to the effect that there are no a priori conceptual truths.

Here, for example, is Harman inveighing against the recalcitrant few, in a paper entitled "Doubts About Conceptual Analysis": "In my view" writes Harman,

> [the distinction between the analytic and the synthetic] was conclusively undermined at least thirty years ago. I am surprised that this fact has not been universally apperciated.[2]

Or consider this passage from a recent paper by Fodor and Lepore in which they talk about a thesis

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[2] "Doubts About Conceptual Analysis", ms, p. 1.

... that almost everybody thinks that there are good reasons to en-
dorse;... [namely]... that there aren't any expressions that are true
or false solely in virtue of what they mean.[3]

One especially important feature of this prevailing consensus is
that it does not extend to Quine's later *skepticism* about meaning.
Famously enough, Quine went on after writing TD to espouse far
more radical views about meaning, including such theses as meaning–
irrealism and meaning–indeterminacy. According to the prevailing
consensus, however, it is not necessary to follow Quine on this un-
appealing trajectory, in order to agree with the author of TD about
analyticity. As realists about meaning, we may treat Quine's self–
contained discussion in TD as the basis for a profound *insight* into
the nature of meaning facts, rather than any sort of rejection of them.
    Despite its great popularity, I have to confess to finding the pre-
vailing view deeply puzzling. For one thing, I don't see that the ar-
gument of TD really does support the rejection of impure analyticity.
For another, I don't see how the sort of argumentative strategy pur-
sued in TD *could conceivably* have supported the rejection of impure
analyticity. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I don't see how
the rejection of impure analyticity is to be reconciled with a plausi-
ble realism about meaning, so that we may regard Quine's claim as
a theorem about meaning facts, rather than a rejection of them. As
you may suspect, these several claims are somewhat connected. To
explain the connections between them and to try to convince you of
their truth is the purpose of the rest of the present paper.

3   The Rejection of Analyticity

Let us begin with this question: What precisely does it mean to say,
as Quine does, and as many others have since repeated, that there
is no "boundary between analytic and synthetic statements"? What
claim is this statement supposed to express? Let's agree, straight
away, that the result being advertised isn't anything modest, of the
form: There are fewer analyticities than we had previously thought.
Or, there are some analytic truths, but they are not important for
the purposes of science. Or anything else of a similar ilk. Rather,
as a very large number of Quine's remarks make clear —remarks

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[3] "Why Meaning (Probably) Isn't Conceptual Role", in *Mind and Language*.
Also in *Science and Knowledge*, Philosophical Issues 3, E. Villanueva (ed.)
(Ridgeview: 1993).

that we will have occasion to review below— the sought–after result is something ambitious to the effect that the notion of analyticity is not cogent. TD's many admirers have divided on whether to read this as the claim that the notion of analyticity does not have a well–defined, determinate content, or whether to read it merely as claiming that, although it has an intelligible content, it is necessarily uninstantiated.

I'll call the first a *Non–factualism* about analyticity:

(NF) No coherent, determinate property is expressed by the predicate 'is analytic' (or, since these are correlative terms, the predicate 'is synthetic'); consequently, no coherent proposition is expressed by sentences of the form '*S* is analytic' and '*S* is synthetic'.

And the second an *Error Thesis* about analyticity:

(ET) There is a coherent, determinate property expressed by 'is analytic', but it is necessarily uninstantiated; consequently, all sentences of the form '*S* is analytic' are necessarily false.[4]

A quick digression: I have sometimes been asked why I consider just this weakening of non–factualism, one that involves, problematically from Quine's official point of view, a modal notion (necessity)? Why not rather attribute to him the following *Very Weak Thesis*:

(VWT) There is a coherent, determinate property expressed by 'is analytic', but *as a matter of fact*, it has never been instantiated; consequently, all tokens of the sentence '*S* is analytic' have been false up to now.

The reason is, first, that VWT is not a philosophically interesting thesis and, second, that it could not have been argued for on the basis of a *philosophy* paper. So although Quine may not be entitled to precisely the ET, I am going to ignore that and not hold it against him. End of digression.

The reason why Quine's sympathizers have not found it easy to make up their minds about exactly which thesis Quine should be read as arguing for, derives from the fact, I think, that TD itself doesn't seem to have a clear view about it. Some passages seem intelligible only on the one reading, others appear to demand the other.

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[4]Nothing fancy is meant by the use of such expressions as 'property' and 'proposition'. Let them stand, respectively, for whatever it is that a predicate and a sentence express.

In favor of the suggestion that Quine's goal is something with the form of a non–factualism about impure analyticity there is, first, the fact that the idiom clearly favored by Quine —that there is no distinction to be drawn between the analytic and the synthetic— sits much better with a non–factualist thesis than with an Error Thesis: the latter would be far more happily expressed by saying that "All sentences are necessarily synthetic".

Further, and more importantly, there is the actual character of Quine's *arguments*. As any reader of TD knows, much of that article is given over to arguing that we don't really understand what 'is analytic' means, that previous explications either fail to specify its meaning in sufficiently non–circular —hence, sufficiently illuminating— terms, or fail to specify it at all.

For example, against the suggestion that 'analyticity' might be understood via a specification of the 'semantical rules' for a language, Quine remarks:

> Let us suppose... an artificial language L_0 whose semantical rules have the form explicitly of a specification, by recursion or otherwise, of all the analytic statements of L_0. The rules tell us that such and such statements, and only those, are the analytic statements of L_0. Now here the difficulty is simply that the rules contain the word 'analytic' which we do not understand! We understand what expressions the rules attribute analyticity to, but we do not understand what the rules attribute to these expressions (33).

There are, then, weighty textual reasons for taking Quine to be arguing for something with the form of a NF. Other considerations, however, pull in the opposite direction. The most striking of these occurs in the following passage from TD concerning stipulative definitions, i.e. the explicitly conventional introduction of new notation for the purposes of abbreviation. The passage is framed by a concession on Quine's part that impure analyticity would be intelligible, provided the notion of synonymy were. In the case of stipulative definitions, writes Quine,

> the definiendum becomes synonymous with the definiens simply because it has been created expressly for the purpose of being synonymous with the definiens. Here we have a really transparent case of synonymy created by definition; would that all species of synonymy were as intelligible (26).

This admission, however, in the context of Quine's concession, would appear to be utterly inconsistent with NF. For a NF about impure analyticity is committed to the claim that there is no coherent, determinate property of synonymy; no conceivable mechanism

could generate an instance of synonymy, for there is no coherent property to generate. A fortiori, no stipulational mechanism could.

In fact, even the ET, as stated, is inconsistent with the concession. For according to the ET, although there is such a property as analyticity, necessarily, no sentence has it. Yet according to the concession, there could be sentences —namely, those built up in appropriate ways out of the expressions implicated in stipulative definitions— that are analytic. So even the ET needs to be modified, if it is to be made consistent with Quine's admission, thus:

(ET*) There is a coherent property expressed by 'is analytic', but, with the exception of those instances that are generated by stipulational mechanisms, it is necessarily uninstantiated.

Well, let me bring the exegetical aspect of this discussion to a premature and artificial close. Quine may have failed to distinguish between NF and the ET, but we needn't. It is clear that a thesis of either form would result in a philosophically important skepticism about impure analyticity. What we need to do is distinguish between the two theses and assess the arguments on their behalf. Does TD have any good arguments for either of them? Is the prevailing view correct in holding that one or the other thesis is established in TD, yet without presupposing the falsity of meaning–realism? I shall argue that it is not.

4   Analyticity and Meaning–Realism

Let me begin by talking about what it is to be a realist about meaning. The minimal commitment of meaning–realism is that there are substantial semantic facts of the form:

> In Peter's mouth at time t, the token inscription "cow" means *cow*, the token inscription "snow is white" means *that snow is white*.

Somewhat more specifically, it is to hold that

(MR): (1) There are properties of the form means q and (2) Some expressions —e.g. "cow" or "snow is white"— enjoy them.

Now, I take it to be *obvious* that the analytic/synthetic distinction is not consistent with the *falsity* of meaning–realism, that the denial of meaning–realism entails the denial of the analytic/synthetic distinction. If expressions don't have meanings, then it is presumably

impossible for any of them to be true by virtue of their meanings. Let's be more specific here. Since meaning–realism consists in a conjunction of theses, the second of which depends upon the first, there are two ways in which it could be falsified: either by denying the second thesis or by denying both. Call the view that results merely from denying the second, "meaning–eliminativism", and that which results from denying both, "meaning–nihilism". Then, it is fairly easy to show that meaning–eliminativism entails the Error Thesis and that meaning–nihilism entails Non–Factualism. Intuitively, if there is a coherent, determinate property of meaning-q, but no expression has it, then although the idea of a sentence's being analytic might make sense, no sentence *could* be analytic. Whereas if the claim is that the very notion of meaning q lacks a determinate coherent content, then so too must any idea that depends upon it, *a fortiori*, the idea of a sentence's being true by virtue of its meaning.

A believer in the prevailing view, however, has to maintain that the converse entailments do not hold, that denying the analytic/ synthetic distinction, defined over the impure notion, does not commit one to meaning–irrealism. Can this be true?

Well, let us explore meaning–realism a bit further. What *sort* of truth is reported by such sentences as:

In Peter's mouth at time t, "cow" means *cow*.[5]

Prejudices aside, it is overwhelmingly natural to give the following (sketch of) an account. To say that the word "cow" means *cow* is to say that tokens of the linguistic form "cow" stand in the *meaning– relation M* to some (probably abstract, but that's not important right now) object C —the concept *cow*.

I am not going to pause at this point to detail all the reasons why such a construal of the logical form of meaning–ascriptions is plausible. Nor am I going to pause to fill in this picture any further. Obviously, what I have described is the merest skeleton of an account. Further detail is called for both about the precise nature of the *relata* —what sorts of abstract objects are concepts?— and about the precise nature of the *meaning–relation*: what precisely is it for a word to stand in that relation to a concept?

In this connection, a variety of proposals is familiar. As regards concepts, there is the view that they are sets of properties, or clusters of differentially weighted properties, or modes of presentations of properties, and so on. As regards the meaning–relation, there is

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[5]This could equally well be done over whole sentences and propositions.

the view that it consists in facts about use, or in facts about dispositions to use, or in facts about the mental states underlying use and so on.

Regardless, however, of how these fundamental notions are fleshed out, I find it difficult to see how either version of the rejection of analyticity is to be made compatible with the meaning–realism they articulate.

5   Non–factualism about Impure Analyticity

Let's begin with the non–factualist rejection of impure analyticity. This thesis states that no coherent, determinate property is expressed by the predicate 'is transformable into a logical truth by the substitution of synonyms for synonyms' and so no coherent proposition by sentences of the form 'S is impurely analytic'. By contrast, you may recall, the Error Thesis allows such sentences to express a coherent content, albeit one that is necessarily false.

Now, it seems to me that the argument demonstrating the incompatibility of meaning–realism with the non–factualist rejection of impure analyticity can be put quite simply: To say that there is no coherent, determinate property of impure analyticity is essentially to say that, for *any* sentence, there is no fact of the matter as to whether it is transformable into a logical truth by the substitution of synonyms for synonyms. Presumably, this is possible only if either there is no fact of the matter about what is a logical truth, or about when two expressions are synonymous. Since the factuality of logic is not in dispute, the only option is a non–factualism about synonymy. But can a meaning realist afford to believe that, although meaning facts are determinate, facts about synonymy aren't?

Such a person would have to hold that, although it makes perfect sense to say that some specific word —say, "cow"— bears some specific relation M to some specific meaning C, it *never* makes sense to say that some *other* word —some other orthographically identified particular— bears precisely the same relation to precisely the same object.

But how could this be? How could it conceivably turn out that it is intelligible to say that "cow" bears M to C, and not merely false but *metaphysically impossible* to say that some other word —"vache" as it may be— also does? What could be so special about the letters "c", "o", "w"?

The answer is that there is nothing special about them. If it makes sense to suppose that one word bears M to C, it makes sense to

suppose that many do. If the meaning–relation makes sense to begin with, then so must the relation of synonymy.

Notice that I have not argued that any sentence *is* analytic in this sense, only that the property is coherent, if meaning–realism is true. And notice that I haven't needed to use the claim that some sentence has a determinate meaning, but only that the supposition that it does have one is coherent. If I am right, then, a non–factualism about impure analyticity is not compatible with meaning–realism. In particular, it entails the strong form of meaning–irrealism I earlier called meaning–nihilism.

6   The Error Thesis about Impure Analyticity

What about an Error thesis about impure analyticity? According to this view, although there are determinate facts about which sentences are transformable into logical truths by the appropriate manipulations of synonymy, this property is necessarily uninstantiated: it is nomically impossible for there to be any impurely analytic sentences.

Once again, however, this skeptical thesis about analyticity leads to an implausible thesis about synonymy —this time the thesis that, although the relation of synonymy is well–defined, it is nomically impossible for there to be synonymous expressions. Can a meaning realist afford to believe that?

Well, I suppose that if we are being very strict about this, we may have to admit that such a position is barely *logically possible*. But it's hardly plausible. And it's certainly not a position for which TD presents any arguments. In fact, it is inconsistent with various things that Quine has to believe.

To begin with, even Quine has to believe that it is possible for two tokens of the same orthographic type to be synonymous, for that much is needed by his own account of logical truth. As we saw in the passage I quoted above, Quine describes the truths of logic as follows: "If we suppose a prior inventory of logical particles,... then in general a logical truth is a statement which is true and which remains true under all reinterpretations of its components other than the logical particles". Clearly, the idea isn't that such statements will remain true no matter how the non–logical particles are substituted for, but rather that they will remain true provided that the non–logical particles are substituted for in a uniform way, with multiple occurrences of the same word receiving the same substitution in every case. But what should we count as the same here?

As Strawson pointed, it wouldn't do merely to insist that multiple occurrences of a word be replaced by orthographically uniform replacements; for it certainly seems possible to imagine an orthographically uniform way of substituting for the non–logical particles of 'All unmarried men are unmarried' that results in a falsehood: 'No unilluminated book is illuminated'. It's hard to know how to fix this without making some use of the idea that the orthographically uniform replacements should express the same meaning.

Secondly, and as we have also seen, even Quine has to admit that two expressions of *different* orthographic types may express the same meaning, provided they are explicitly stipulated to do so.

Let us then sum up. We know that the synonymy relation makes sense. We know that it can be instantiated by pairs of expressions of the same orthographic type. And we know that it can even be instantiated by pairs of expressions of distinct types, provided that they are introduced by means of an explicit stipulation. It seems to me that, after all this, we would need a *very special* argument indeed to convince us that it is simply impossible to get synonymous expression pairs of distinct orthographic types in any other way, via some other mechanism. But there is no such argument.

If all of this is true, then neither of the skeptical theses about impure analyticity can be sustained. A meaning realist cannot coherently doubt the possibility of *conceptual truths*.

7   Is Relationism the Issue?

Now, I anticipate the complaint that these arguments are made plausible not merely on the assumption of meaning–realism, but only on the rich relationist construal of it that I adopted as a working hypothesis. Were we not to construe our realism about meaning properties as involving a *relation* between words and meanings, then the advertised incompatibility results would not follow. If that were true, and the relationist construal optional, then the denial of the analytic/synthetic distinction may after all be compatible with meaning–realism.[6]

But I think that such a complaint would be mistaken. To see this, suppose that instead of construing meaning facts as involving relations to meanings we construed them thus: "cow" means *cow*

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[6]Such an objector might continue by pointing out that a Platonistic construal is explicitly ruled out by Quine in the opening pages of TD, before any of the substantive critique of the analytic/synthetic distinction has even begun; p. 22 Q.

just in case "cow" has the monadic property R —a history of use, a disposition, or whatever your favorite candidate may be. Precisely the same arguments go through. Abbreviating somewhat, it remains equally difficult to see how, given that "cow" has property R, it could fail to make sense to ask whether some other word does, or fail to be genuinely possible that some other word does.

8   The Argumentative Strategy of TD

If these claims are right, then, of course, the prevailing view is deeply mistaken: there is no way to coherently agree with Quine on analyticity but to disagree with him on meaning–irrealism.

Implicit in this train of thought, however, is a second and perhaps more surprising conclusion, namely this: No paper exemplifying the *argumentative strategy of TD* could possibly have succeeded in impugning the analytic/synthetic distinction. Let me explain.

As the biconditional linking the denial of the analytic/synthetic distinction with meaning–irrealism suggest, there look to be two strategies for arguing against the analytic/synthetic distinction. On the one hand, one may try to argue for the denial directly, and live with the fact that one or another thesis of meaning–irrealism will fall out as a consequence; or one may argue for it indirectly, by deriving it from some direct argument for meaning–irrealism itself.

But the first strategy —the one that in fact corresponds to the strategy pursued by TD— has got to be polemically impotent. Meaning irrealism —the view that in one or another way, nothing means anything— must be regarded as *prima facie* more implausible than *any other thesis about meaning*. Absent a powerful and direct argument for the claim that nothing means anything, the fact that some other argument seems to lead to a view that entails that nothing means anything, can only be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of that argument. On the other hand, if one had a powerful and direct argument for meaning–irrealism, then the denial of the analytic/synthetic distinction would follow trivially. Either way one neither needs nor can use the sort of argument for which TD has become so famous over the years —a direct argument, not appealing to meaning–irrealism as a lemma, against the analytic/synthetic distinction.

It is tempting —and not just a little plausible— to tell the story of the development of Quine's views about meaning as the story of the unfolding of this set of realizations. Notoriously, Quine goes on to espouse meaning–irrealism. But he doesn't merely derive it from

his antecedently established rejection of analyticity; he argues for it directly, attempting to show that all the materials that could plausibly be thought to constitute the meaning–relation fail to constitute a determinate such relation.

Whether this direct argument succeeds is beyond the scope of this paper, though I should perhaps record here that I fully concur with the verdict of the prevailing view that it doesn't. This is perhaps the only aspect of the prevailing view with which I agree. This paper, however, is concerned with the a/s distinction, the absence of which would be the least of our worries if Quine were right to be a meaning–irrealist.

9   Conclusion

Our argument up to this point has been designed to show that no meaning realist can accept Quine's rejection of impure analyticity. But that, of course, isn't the same as showing that impure analyticity provides a satisfactory account of the apriority of conceptual truth: that richer claim is hostage to two further assumptions. The first is the claim that facts about synonymy are a priori. And the second is the claim that the truths of logic are a priori. Neither of these further claims has been argued for in this paper. Both are defended elsewhere.[7]