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MA Research Report

Analyticity: Boghossian on Quine

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In his infamous paper, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Quine, 1951), Quine argues that no distinction can be drawn between those statements which are analytic, and those which are synthetic. Aside from issuing a threat to the then prevailing tradition of logical positivism, the paper spawned an intense period of debate concerning the cogency of the analytic/synthetic distinction. While the matter has yet to be settled with any certainty, many contemporary philosophers are somewhat cautious in making any claims of analyticity – an indication that the impact of Quine's project is still felt today.

My concern in this research report is with a contemporary response to Quine's dismissal of the purported distinction between those statements which are analytic, and those which are synthetic. In the wake of scepticism over the lucidity of the analytic/synthetic distinction, Paul Boghossian defends the distinction, albeit, the distinction between those statements which are synthetic, and those statements which are analytic *in a specific kind of way*. His argument rests on a distinction between different kinds of analyticity (Boghossian, 1996). Boghossian holds that analytic statements are either metaphysically

analytic (where the meaning of the terms in the statement determine the truth of the statement), or epistemically analytic (where knowledge of the meaning of the terms in the statement justifies our knowledge of the truth of the statement) (Boghossian, 1996). Interestingly, Boghossian's contention is that the distinction between different types of analyticity underpins two of the central tenets of logical positivism respectively: on his understanding, metaphysical analyticity underpins the linguistic theory of necessary truth; while epistemic analyticity is fundamental to the analytic theory of the *a priori* (Boghossian, 1996).

Boghossian's claim is that Quine is ambiguous regarding which kind of analyticity is the target of his attack in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", and that his failure to draw a distinction between different types of analyticity leads to his erroneous dismissal of both kinds of analyticity and their concomitant theories. His thought is that Quine was correct to dismiss the metaphysical notion of analyticity, and thus the linguistic theory of necessary truth; but mistaken in dismissing the epistemic notion of analyticity, and hence the analytic theory of the *a priori*. Being of the opinion that he has successfully salvaged the notion of epistemic analyticity from Quine's arguments, Boghossian accepts the challenge of providing a positive account of what it is for a statement to be epistemically analytic. Thus the second phase of his project is to demonstrate the substantive work that that he believes epistemic analyticity can do in explaining the feasibility of *a priori* knowledge.

For the purposes of this research paper, I am interested in a critical assessment of the first phase of Boghossian's project. My research interests include a critique of the very notion of epistemic analyticity itself – in particular, I am eager to understand whether Boghossian is entitled to draw the distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity at all, and if epistemic analyticity is genuinely immune from Quine's arguments against analyticity. Moreover, I am interested in evaluating Boghossian's claim that one can have a coherent notion of epistemic analyticity without being committed to any form of metaphysical analyticity. Ultimately I argue that Boghossian's first phase of argument is successful: a notion of epistemic analyticity can be salvaged from the Quinean critique of analyticity given that:

1.(a.) A distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity can be sustained

1.(b.) Epistemic analyticity is immune from the Quinean critique of analyticity

In what follows, I lay the groundwork for the expository sections of this research essay through exploring some ideas around what it is to believe or know something, both of which are central to this discussion. I then briefly consider Quine's arguments, as found in his paper "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", before approaching Boghossian's response to Quine. In the closing chapters of this research report, I critically discuss Boghossian's arguments against metaphysical analyticity, as well as purported separation of metaphysical and epistemic analyticity.

Before moving to explore the idea of what it is to believe something, it is worthwhile spelling out my attitudes towards the content of belief. It is of value to articulate such assumptions at an early stage in this research report in a bid to dispel any queries that the reader might have. Within this research report, I'm absconding from making any commitments as to the nature of the contents of belief[1]. Much of the impetus behind this decision stems from the fact that I don't believe that the crucial features of the arguments in this paper - both those offered in exposition and in critical response - hinge on adopting one theory of belief over the other. A further motivation is the attempt to dispel any tension that might arise from assessing an argument which is rooted in a historical context whose assumptions (e.g. regarding the content of belief), are at odds with our contemporary thought on the issue[2]. I feel that some arguments that philosophers have made against Quine (which centre on his idiosyncratic understanding of the contents of beliefs) are misguided, and land up completely avoiding the substantive claims which his arguments make. I'd like to minimise the distraction which such idiosyncratic beliefs might cause, and further close off this avenue of attack before it even has a chance to develop. I wholeheartedly accept the charge that I may be sidestepping the issue, but feel justified in doing so for clarity's sake[3].

[1] This is not to say that I don't hold opinions regarding the content of beliefs-on the contrary, I think that the propositional account goes a far way to articulate what it is that we think of when contemplating the content of our beliefs. It is simply in the context of this discussion that I'm choosing to sit on the fence.

[2] Quine worked with a linguistic picture of belief content, in which he held that the content of belief is an interpreted sentence. Contemporary thought adopts a theory of propositional belief, in which the contents of out beliefs are propositions: mind-independent, abstract entities which can be grasped.

[3] This is counter to Boghossian who develops a response that is sympathetic to Quine's linguistic view. While he does claim that this decision is pragmatic, and made only in an attempt to challenge Quine in his own terms, I feel that this inadvertently becomes a hurdle to making sense of his response to Quine.

In order to maintain this proposed neutrality, I am introducing the term 'statement' to serve as a technical place-holder for the content of beliefs. Part of this stipulation is that 'statement' is theory-neutral, and makes no suggestions as to what could or should be thought of as the correct theory of belief content. Thus, when I speak of *grasping the statement*, I am implicitly referring to grasping the *content* of the belief. My feeling is that the arguments below could easily be adapted to reflect one's choice of theory of belief – including the theory of belief wherein the content of belief is thought to be interpreted sentences (as Quine might have advocated), or a more propositional account of belief (as contemporary philosophers are fond of advancing).

Armed with these preliminary qualifications, it is worth thinking about what it is to believe something, and what it would be for that belief to be known *a priori*. This will provide the conceptual background necessary for both the exposition and critical evaluation chapters in this research report.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Background

2.1 Believing and Knowing

Consider the following set of statements (Boghossian, 1996):[4]

2.(a.) In order *to believe p*, a person T must hold true a statement S which means p in T's language.

2.(b.) In order *to know p*, a person T must justifiably hold S (which means p in T's language) true, with a strength sufficient for knowledge, and S must be true.

These schematisations capture, in a very general sense, what we mean when we talk of someone (2a) believing or (2b) knowing something. The first schematisation (2a) captures the thought that believing p involves assenting to that statement S which means that p (in your language, or idiolect). In other words, it is impossible for one to believe p without believing that S is true. Agreeing with the content of the belief is crucial aspect of being able to hold the belief itself. The second schematisation (2b) provides an account of knowledge as justified true belief. Taking (2a) as its basis, it builds in the ideas of not only being warranted in holding S true, but of S actually being true. Thus to

[4]With my theory-neutral qualification

know p it is not enough to simply believe that S is true- one needs to be justified in believing S to be true[5]. Within this schema, it is the notion of justification which works to connect the content of one's beliefs to facts about the world – knowledge is only possible if the means through which one is justified in the truth of one's beliefs is rigorous enough to enable a connection between the content of one's beliefs and the objective facts about the world. Different kinds of justification i.e. different ways in which the content of one's belief and facts about the world are to be connected – render different kinds of knowledge.

Epistemological investigations into the nature of justification have traditionally resulted in the emergence of two broad classes of justification: *a posteriori* and *a priori* justification. Given that different kinds of justification render different kinds of knowledge, the distinction between *a posteriori* and *a priori* justification have thus traditionally cleaved the scope of knowledge into two mutually exclusive groups: *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge[6]. Consider the following sets of statements, both of which are subsets of (2b).

i. In order to know p *a posteriori*, a person T must justifiably hold S (which means p in T's language) true, on the basis of experience, with a strength sufficient for knowledge, and S must be true.

[5] This is the traditional picture of knowledge as justified true belief. I here knowingly set aside issues associated with Gettier-type objections, as this account only demands a very general and intuitive picture of knowledge theory with which to work.

[6] While it is not the subject of this present discussion, Hartry Field (2000) offers an interesting account of how the distinction between *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge might be drawn. See his article in "New Essays on the A Prioi" (Boghossian and Peacocke, 2000)

ii. In order to know p *a priori,* a person T must justifiably hold S (which means p in T's language) true, not on the basis of experience, with a strength sufficient for knowledge, and S must be true.

The distinction between (2a) and (2b) rests on the different kinds of warrant they employ: (2a) is a schematisation of *a posteriori* knowledge, which relies on *a posteriori* justification; whereas (2b) is a schematisation of *a priori* knowledge, which in turn relies on *a priori* justification.

2.2 *A Posteriori* Knowledge

A posteriori justification, and hence *a posteriori* knowledge, is historically the less controversial and hence less problematic region of knowledge. In essence, *a posteriori* justification is justification based on experience. Hence the *a posteriori* warrant for believing S is simply that one's experience supports S. Traditionally, it has been thought that the experience referred to here is to be understood as sensory experience – this is grounded in the assumption that our senses provide a reliable means of both connecting our thoughts to the external world, and providing information to us about this external world. For example, if S is that statement that "it is raining outside", one can assent to S if one has experience which supports S- e.g. that you can *hear* the rain on the roof, *see* the rain falling outside, and that when you go outside, you *get wet*. It is one's experience that acts as a justification in assenting to the content of the belief, as it is experience that connects the content of one's belief with the truth of the meaning of the statement (which expresses that belief).

2.3 The Problem of *A Priori* Knowledge

Contrary to the (relatively) straightforward account of *a posteriori* justification, *a priori* justification, and hence *a priori* knowledge, is more difficult to explicate. *A priori* justification is justification which is independent of experience, and hence *a priori* knowledge is knowledge which is justified independently of experience. More precisely, *a priori* knowledge is thought to be justification which does not depend on empirical evidence, i.e. justification which is independent of sensory experience. The challenge is to explain how such warrant, independent of sensory experience, is both possible, and of sufficient strength to justify us in holding some *a priori* beliefs as knowledge.

Traditionally, the scope of *a priori* knowledge is thought to incorporate the truths of logic and mathematics, as well as a further class of statements whose justification does not seem to depend on empirical evidence (Orenstein, 2002). Included in this class are statements such as:

2.(c.) All bachelors are unmarried men

2.(d.) Nothing which is red all over can be green all over

2.(e.) Everything that is physical is extended

Where sensory experience was able to play an effective role in justifying belief in the truth of a statement (within *a posteriori* knowledge), this explanation is not permitted to play a role within the above examples of *a priori* knowledge - hence an alternative mechanism needs to be offered in order to explain how it is that we might be justified in knowing the truth of a belief *a priori*, and hence come to have *a priori* knowledge.

It is worth noting that there are at least two ways of interpreting the strength of the notion of warrant which is needed to ground *a priori* knowledge. In a weaker sense, the claim is simply that *a priori* justification needs to be independent of empirical evidence. This claim implies that *a priori* justification is defeasible in light of possible future empirical evidence- i.e. while *a priori* justification is sufficient to secure *a priori* knowledge at this point in time, it is by no means contradictory to suggest that future empirical evidence could justify us in refuting that this is a genuine case of *a priori* knowledge. The alternative, stronger reading is that *a priori* justification needs to be independent of empirical evidence, and that this justification is indefeasible in light of future empirical evidence (Boghossian, 1996). Thus, on this stronger reading, *a priori* knowledge can never be challenged by empirical evidence[7].

It is the task of explaining *a priori* justification that has become the crucial focal point in understanding how it is that we are able to have *a priori* knowledge. It is perhaps worthwhile to pause and consider why it is that philosophers have been at such great pains to explain the very possibility of *a priori* knowledge – essentially, we need to ask what it is about this kind of knowledge that has warranted such fervent attempts at explication. For surely, the task of explaining the possibility of knowledge would be far simpler if all knowledge were to be considered *a posteriori* knowledge. As suggested earlier in this paper, justifying *a posteriori* knowledge is relatively straightforward, as one simply has to appeal to experience. Admittedly, this is not always as simple as I make it

[7] Historically, I believe that this second, stronger reading has been influential as it results from the idea that *a priori* knowledge articulates necessity. Thus if *a priori* knowledge describes metaphysical necessity, then it cannot be the case that such knowledge would be defeasible in light of empirical evidence. Most of the arguments in this research paper can be thought of as providing arguments for the second, stronger reading of *a priori* justifications.

out to be, as one's experience of the world is often fraught with red herrings (such as mirages, hallucinations and fake barns), which make separating 'real' or 'genuine' experiences from our illusory experiences that much more difficult[8]; but the point is that, in theory, justifying one's beliefs on the basis of experience ought to be a fairly uncomplicated affair. Why then should we go to the effort of attempting to explicate the fairly mysterious idea of non-experiential justification, if there is a seemingly more simple method of justification at hand?[9]

To start, it is worth mentioning that there have been those in history who have outright rejected this idea of non-experiential justification, and thus of the possibility *a priori* knowledge (Cassam, 2000). There are those empiricists who have rejected the very possibility of *a priori* knowledge given that they deny the possibility of justifying knowledge through non-empirical means. The paradigm empiricist of this type is John Stuart Mill (Orenstein, 2002). As a thoroughgoing empiricist, Mill was committed to the idea that all knowledge was ultimately justified through empirical means, i.e., on the basis of experience. As such, Mill denied the rationalist position that rational intuition is the source of our *a priori* knowledge[10], and the traditional empiricist position that *a priori* knowledge is justified through non-experiential means. For Mill, all knowledge was *a posteriori* knowledge.

[8] I take it that one would not comfortable in justifying knowledge on the basis of illusory experiences, as these would not seem to be the right kind of experiences to help us determine whether our beliefs are true or not

[9] In what follows, I briefly outline a radical empiricist, and a rationalist position on the problem of a priori knowledge, by way of introducing the logical positivist stance on the issue.

[10] More on this point below

For anyone who is to take the radical stance of denying the possibility of *a priori* knowledge, the burden is to explain away the apparent appearance of such knowledge. Mill's task was thus to provide an account of those types of knowledge which the scope of *a priori* knowledge was thought to incorporate. His account of how it was that we come to be justified in claiming to know the truths of logic and mathematics was based on the idea of inductive generalisation, which in turn was based on experience (Ayer, 1982). Consider the claim "either it is raining, or it is not raining", which is an instantiation of the law of excluded middle. On Mill's account, our knowledge of the truth which the law of excluded middle expresses is justified through the overwhelming body of evidence in favour of this truth, which is drawn from our experience. Thus, every instance in which it is either the case, or it is not the case (e.g. that it is it raining or not raining; or that my knee is hurting, or not hurting; or that there is or is not a cream cake in the kitchen), is a particular instance which serves to confirm the truth expressed by the law of excluded middle. Thus the law of excluded middle is an inductive generalisation from experience. On Mill's account, our justification for the law of excluded middle was *a posteriori*. Mill thought that this method could be applied to all of truths of logic, and mathematics.

An interesting consequence of Mill's theory was that the truths of logic and mathematics, through being empirically justified, were thought to be truths about reality, or truths about the way the world is. Interestingly, Mill shared this feature of logical and mathematic truths with many rationalists, who also believed that *a priori* truth gave one access to factual truths which described features of reality. While I'm not suggesting that Mill was

any kind of rationalist, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the positions of radical empiricism and rationalism might share similar consequences. Where the rationalists fundamentally differed from Mill was in their support of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge, and hence in their account of *a priori* justification. As such the rationalists, while sharing this factualist account of logic and mathematics with radical empiricists such as Mill, offered an alternative to Mill's denial of the possibility of *a priori* knowledge.

The standard rationalist account of *a priori* knowledge stems from one of the key tenets of rationalism, namely that it is through pure reasoning that we can come to know of substantial features about the world around us (Urmson, 1960). As such, rationalists embrace the idea of *a priori* knowledge, claiming that the *a priori* justification needed to ground such knowledge comes from pure reasoning, which is more commonly known as the faculty of rational insight. On the rationalist account, at least some of our *a priori* knowledge can be accounted for in this manner, on the understanding that the rest of our *a priori* knowledge is derived from this underived *a priori* knowledge. Exercising our faculty of rational insight, also known as rational intuition, gives us insight into the nature of reality, and hence becomes a source of justification for us claiming to know the truth of the statement expressed by a belief. This faculty is thought to be distinct from our five senses.

It is worth noting that this justification is *a priori*, as it is independent of experience, and based entirely on this exercising of our rational intuition. Just as experience serves as *a*

posteriori justification which allows us to connect the content of one's belief with the truth that it expresses (and thus justify us in holding *a posteriori* knowledge), so rational intuition serves as *a priori* justification which allows us to connect the content of one's belief with the truth that it expresses, and thus justify us in holding *a priori* knowledge.

The logical positivists found both the rationalist and radical empiricist treatments of the problem of *a priori* knowledge unpalatable. By way of introducing their ideas, and of demonstrating why it was that they found these treatments of *a priori* knowledge so unsatisfactory, here is a brief outline of their approach to philosophy.

In general, the logical positivists were strict empiricists who held that all (substantial) knowledge was to be grounded in experience. The positivists were impressed by the scientific method (and the success that it had experienced in the empirical sciences), and hence were motivated to introduce the scientific method as a means of doing philosophy. They took the scientific method to be the methodology of testing hypotheses within experiments as a means of generating results which would either confirm or disprove the hypothesis in question (Weinberg, 2007). Part of the motivation for this introduction was an attempt to generate the kind of consensus that was apparent within scientific circles (regarding the status of scientific theories) within philosophical thought- i.e. it was an attempt to introduce the idea of generating results which could be used as confirmation or disconfirmation of philosophical theories. This general adoption of the scientific method supported the empiricist claim that all (substantial) knowledge was empirical, i.e. that all knowledge about the world needed to be justified through empirical means (on the basis

of experience)[11]. This claim developed into one of the central tenets of logical positivism, reductionism, which claimed that every meaningful statement is directly or indirectly tied to experience, i.e. that every meaningful statement can be reduced to a statement which describes pure sensory experience. This is turn led to the contention that claims about metaphysics were meaningless as they failed to be empirically verified.

In addition to this empiricist claim, the logical positivists were also heavily influenced by the results of the then-recent investigations into the foundations of mathematics and logic. Part of the results of these investigations had demonstrated that the truths of logic and mathematics had a distinctly *a priori* nature- i.e. the justification of such truths did not seem to come from our experience of the world around us. As such, the challenge for the logical positivists became the task of holding onto their strict empiricist thesis which claimed that all knowledge was to have empirical justification, while accommodating this class of knowledge which seemed to have non-empirical justification. Their solution was to account for the truths of logic and mathematics in a non-empirical, but relatively innocuous manner (Weinberg, 2007).

In order to achieve this, the logical positivists appealed to a distinction between analytic and synthetic truths. This distinction was primarily a linguistic distinction, and described how the meaning of the terms within the statement might assist one in coming to know the truth of a statement. On this account, a synthetic statement is one in which knowledge of the truth of the statement cannot be secured solely on the basis of the

[11] In effect, this means that all claims about knowledge could be empirically tested, and either confirmed or disconfirmed

meaning of the terms which comprise the statement. Thus understanding the meaning of the terms in the statement "All vixens live in Norway" will not allow us to be justified in claiming that this statement is either true or false. Indeed, surely only the results of some empirical investigation will be able to secure the truth of this claim. Contrary to this, an analytic statement is one in which knowledge of the meaning of the ingredient terms in the statement justifies one in knowing the truth of the statement. Thus, within the statement "All vixens are female foxes", understanding the meaning of the terms will allow us to claim that this statement is expressing a truth, albeit only a linguistic truth.

The logical positivists claimed that *a priori* truths were analytic truths which meant that they simply expressed linguistic truths. In this manner, *a priori* knowledge was devoid of factual content, and hence was not knowledge about the world around us (Weinberg, 2007). Thus it did not require empirical justification, and could be accommodated within the logical positivists' empiricist doctrine. It is important to note that the claim that *a priori* knowledge was not factual did not render *a priori* knowledge senseless and useless; for although *a priori* knowledge did not give us information about that world around us, it did serve to show us how it is that we use language through revealing our linguistic conventions, and thus further reveal unsuspecting implications of our beliefs (Ayer, 1982). Our linguistic conventions which analytic statements reveal also serve to ground the necessity of *a priori* knowledge, for it is not possible to deny the truths which such statements express without contravening the linguistic conventions presupposed by our very denial! For example, it would not be possible to claim that "All vixens are not female foxes" as the very term 'vixen' simply means a 'female fox"; hence it is not

possible that there are vixens that are not female foxes[12]. It is further interesting to note that the logical positivists thought that it is possible that our linguistic conventions might have been different, as this would simply have been entailed by our choosing to use words differently from the manner in which we actually use them. The point is that however we might have chosen to use words, the analytic truths which record such usages will always be necessary.

It should be noted that the above example of an analytic statement is very much in line with Kant's conception of analytic statements (Orenstein, 2002). Kant introduced the term 'analytic' as a means of describing conceptual truths in which the meaning of the predicate was contained in the subject of the statement. Thus in the statement, "All vixens are female foxes", the meaning of the predicate "are female foxes" is contained in the subject "all vixens". The point here is that, while influenced by Kant's construal of analytic statements, the logical positivists thought that the scope of analytic truths was far wider than simply conceptual truths (which, on Kant's account, had to be of the subject-predicate form) (Orenstein, 2002). As such, they thought that analytic, and hence *a priori* truths incorporated conceptual truths (such as "All vixens are female foxes"), as well as logical truths (such as the law of excluded middle), and mathematical truths (such as "3+3=6")[13].

With this backdrop in place, it should now be evident why the logical positivists found the rationalist and radical empiricist treatments of the problem of *a priori* knowledge so

[12] I here set aside the colloquial use of the term 'vixen' to describe a spiteful woman

[13] The logical positivist's inclusion of the truths of logic and mathematics as analytic truths is also contrary to Kant's position- Kant thought that such truths were *synthetic a priori* truths.

unpalatable. On the rationalist account, the claim was that *a priori* knowledge was substantial knowledge about the world, and that this knowledge could be justified on the basis of rational intuition. Both doctrines are denied by the logical positivists. Firstly, the logical positivists deny that *a priori* knowledge is substantial knowledge- on their construal, *a priori* knowledge is non-empirical knowledge, and hence is not knowledge about how the world is (but rather knowledge about how it is that we use symbols and language). Secondly, the logical positivists had no place in their doctrine for the mysterious faculty of rational intuition- indeed, part of the problem here is that no substantial (empirical) account of the mechanism of rational intuition has yet been provided (Orenstein, 2002).

While the positivists might have had some sympathy for the radical empiricist's account of (purported) *a priori* knowledge, their claim would have been that this account fails to account for the necessity of *a priori* knowledge. Against Mill, they would have found his doctrine of inductive generalisation as a means of accounting for the truths of logic and mathematics an incomplete account of the nature of logical and mathematical truths. In turn, their grounding of *a priori* truths in analytic truths gave mathematical and logic truths their necessity.

Chapter 3

Quine, and *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*

It was this prevailing trend of logical positivism that was Quine's target of attack in his paper "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Quine, 1951). The paper spawned an intense period of debate over the cogency of the analytic / synthetic distinction, and can be thought of as the beginning of the demise in popularity of logical positivism.

In broad terms, the paper can be thought of as containing two strands of arguments. The first argument (and that which occupies most of the paper) is against what Quine calls the 'intelligibility' of the notion of analyticity. The second strand of argument (in the closing sections of the paper), through an appeal to the idea of meaning holism, shows how the two 'dogmas' of empiricism can be thought of as one dogma – and hence how a rejection of the first dogma brings with it a rejection of the second. Before moving to have a brief look at Quine's arguments within "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", it is worthwhile making a few points of clarification.

The two dogmas of empiricism (as the referred to in the paper), refer to two of the central tenets of logical positivism. The first dogma is the analytic / synthetic distinction, i.e. the

distinction between those statements which we can label analytic, and those which we can label synthetic. In effect, this is the dogma which claims that we can cleave the sphere of knowledge into two kinds of knowledge- analytic, *a priori* knowledge which can be justified solely on the basis of knowledge of meaning; and synthetic, *a posteriori* knowledge which can be justified on the basis of empirical evidence (i.e. through experience). The second dogma is that of reductionism. This idea is simply the claim that all synthetic statements can be reduced to statements about experience. In effect, this is an expression of the strict empiricism which was the foundation of logical positivism.

In dismissing the analytic / synthetic distinction, Quine's overall strategy is to demonstrate that we do not have an adequate understanding of the term 'analytic' in order to sustain the distinction between truths which we describe as analytic, and those which we describe as synthetic (Quine, 1951). He argues that any attempt to explain the notion of analyticity gives rise to circularity.

In brief, Quine considers several means of explicating the term 'analytic' (Quine, 1951):

3.(a.) in virtue of an understanding of meaning

3.(b.) in virtue of an understanding of synonymy, where:

i. synonymy is understood in terms of definition

ii. synonymy is understood in terms of interchangeability *salva veritate*

iii. synonymy is understood in terms of semantic rules

Quine's impetus for pursuing an explication of analyticity in virtue of meaning stems from the logical empiricist understanding that analytic statements are those statements

which are true in virtue of the meaning of their component terms. However, he is quick to dismiss meanings as a viable option for explicating analyticity, given that once one separates the theory of meaning from the theory of reference, as is suggested by Frege, it is difficult to discern what kind of ontological status meanings have- indeed Quine claims that "meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned" (Quine, 1951, p. 23).

Given the dubious status of meanings, Quine's contention is that one is more likely to make sense of analyticity through an understanding of synonymy (Quine, 1951). Much of this claim stems from Quine's understanding that, within the scope of analytic truths, there are two kinds of analytic truths: logical truths, and other analytic truths. Within *"*Two Dogmas of Empiricism", Quine is concerned to tackle this second, broader class of analytic truths, and, for the sake of argument, is prepared to accept the cogency of the idea of analytic truths of logic.[14] As such, Quine takes as his starting point a theory of analyticity forwarded by Frege, which suggests that this second class of analytic truths can be reduced to the first class of logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms (Quine, 1951). If possible, this would lighten the explanatory load through our only having then to explain the *a priority* of logically analytic truths, (as opposed to having to explain the possibility of knowing logical truths, in addition to other analytic truths), and the *a priority* of synonymy. Thus on Frege's account, it appears that the analytic truth

3.(c.) All vixens are female foxes

[14] It is the task of two other famous papers, "Truth by Convention" (Quine, 1936), and "Carnap and Logical Truth" (Quine, 1973) to dispel the cogency of analytic logical truths

is reducible to the logical truth

3.(d.) All vixens are vixens

given that the term 'vixens' is synonymous with 'female foxes'. The burden of explaining analyticity is thus simply the burden of explaining synonymy (Quine, 1951).

Quine's argument against the intelligibility of the notion of synonymy, and thus analyticity, runs something like this (Quine, 1951):

(a) Argument against the intelligibility of synonymy

1. Understanding the term 'analyticity' relies on our understanding the term 'synonymy'
2. The notion of synonymy is unintelligible, iff there is no genuine understanding of the term
3. There is no genuine understanding of the term 'synonymy' unless there is a non-circular definition of the term.
4. There is no non-circular definition of the term 'synonymy'
5. Therefore, the notion of synonymy is unintelligible

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6. Therefore, the notion of analyticity is unintelligible

The first premise is simply stating Quine's understanding, as per Frege's suggestion, that our understanding of analyticity rests on our understanding of synonymy. The second and third premises set out the necessary conditions for having an understanding of the term 'synonymy', namely that this understanding, if it is to be genuine, must not involve any circular definition of the term 'synonymy'. The real crux of the argument comes in the fourth premise, wherein Quine states that there is no non-circular definition of the term 'synonymy'. Much of the support for this premise comes from Quine's discussion

of the notions of definition, interchangeability, and the role of semantic rules. Quine argues that we cannot make use of any of these concepts to explain synonymy (and thus analyticity), given that the correct use of these concepts presupposes the concept of synonymy or analyticity. Attempting to explicate the notion of synonymy and analyticity invokes circularity, given that Quine holds that the concepts we employ to do the explanatory work pre-suppose the very notions that we are attempting to elucidate (Quine 1951).

Quine then moves to claim that, given that there is no non-circular definition of "synonymy", the notion of synonymy is unintelligible. This unintelligibility of synonymy leads to the term 'analyticity' being unintelligible (given analyticity's reliance on the meaning of the term 'synonymy'). In light of this, his belief is that one cannot draw a distinction between analytic and synthetic truths – he writes:

> "That there is such a distinction to be drawn at all is an unempirical dogma of empiricists, a metaphysical article of faith" (Quine, 1951, p. 34).

Chapter 4

A Contemporary Response to Quine

Paul Boghossian (Boghossian, 1996, 2000, and 2003) offers a contemporary response to Quine's dismissal of the analytic / synthetic distinction, in which he attempts to achieve the following:

4.(a.) Introduce the distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity

4.(b.) Demonstrate that the only notion of analyticity which we should be interested in is epistemic analyticity

4.(c.) Save this notion of epistemic analyticity from Quine's attack on the cogency of the analytic / synthetic distinction

4.(d.) Demonstrate how this notion of epistemic analyticity can do some serious work in the epistemology of *a priori* knowledge[15]

Crucially, Boghossian's introduction of the distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity serves to limit the scope of analyticity which he is referring to when defending analyticity against Quine's attack. Part of his motivation in doing so is that he believes that Quine was rather sloppy in explaining which notion of analyticity he was referring to, and as such, is guilty of equivocating between the notions (Boghossian,

[15] For the purposes of this research paper, I am concerned with the first three claims -4.(a.) to 4.(c) – an explication and critical assessment of the fourth claim is a further research question which is beyond the scope of this current discussion, but is a possible further research consideration

1996). Importantly, this equivocation occurs across Quine's broader body of work. For example, in the passage below, Quine seems to be referring to an epistemological understanding of the notion of analyticity (Boghossian, 2000):

> "The linguistic doctrine of logical truth, which is an epistemological doctrine, goes on to say that logical truths are true purely by virtue of the intended meanings, or intended usage, of the logical words" (Quine, 1973, p. 103)

However, Boghossian claims that there are points at which Quine appears to be using the notion of analyticity in a distinctly metaphysical manner (Boghossian, 2000). Here is an example taken from "Two Dogmas of Empiricism":

> "It is obvious that truth in general depends on both language and extralinguistic fact. The statement 'Brutus killed Caesar' would be false if the world had been different in certain ways, but it would also be false if the word 'killed' happened to rather have the sense of begat" (Quine, 1951, p. 34)[16]

As we shall soon see, Boghossian thinks that the notion of metaphysical analyticity is rather absurd, and as such, cannot be instantiated. Importantly though, he believes that it can be separated from the more epistemic notion of analyticity which was thought to underpin the analytic theory of the *a priori*. He provides independent reasons for dismissing the notion of metaphysical analyticity. His contention is thus that the only notion of analyticity worthy of our attention is that of epistemic analyticity.

[16] The above examples demonstrate that Quine certainly equivocated between different interpretations of analyticity across his broader body of work- the point here is that this is indicative of the general logical positivist attitude towards the notion of analyticity

4.1 Epistemic and Metaphysical Analyticity

On Boghossian's account (Boghossian, 1996 & 2000), there are two ways in which the classic logical positivist claim concerning analyticity might be understood. Taking the logical positivist's claim to be that analytic statements are those which are true by virtue of the meaning of their constituent terms, the first reading is metaphysical in nature. On this reading, 'true by virtue of meaning' means that in some sense, the truth of the statement is dependent only on its meaning, i.e. that in some sense, the truth of the statement is created by the meaning of its constituent terms, or, as Boghossian mentions, that the truth of the statement "owes its truth value completely to its meaning, and not at all the 'the facts'" (Boghossian, 1996, p. 364). The second reading of the logical positivist's claim about analyticity is distinctly epistemic in character. On this reading, knowledge of the meaning of the constituent terms justifies one in claiming to know the truth of the statement. Thus, Boghossian claims that a statement is epistemically analytic if "grasp of its meaning can suffice for justified belief in the truth of the proposition it expresses" (Boghossian, 2003, p. 1).

Boghossian's understanding is that metaphysical analyticity was used by the logical positivists to ground the linguistic theory of necessity, i.e. linguistic truths, which were expressed by analytic truths, were necessary in virtue of the meanings of their constituent terms (Boghossian, 1996). But how are we to understand this idea of truth being grounded solely in meaning? At the heart of the issue here is a question about the relationship between truth and meaning, or, more specifically, about how it is that truth can depend (solely) on meaning. The difficulty in understanding this stems from our

everyday conception of truth, which, although a property of statements (and hence dependent on the meaning of the constituent terms in the statement), also depends in part on the way the world is. Thus we feel justified in ascribing the property 'true' to a statement if its meaning correctly matches a feature (or features) of the world[17]. Boghossian refers to this as the 'meaning-truth truism' (Boghossian, 2000). Through only relying on a notion of truth that depends solely on meaning, and not at all on features of the world, metaphysical analyticity falls prey to a charge of resulting in an impoverished notion of truth, as it is a notion of truth that relies only on meaning (and not on features of the world).

Boghossian believes that there is a response available to the proponent of metaphysical analyticity which might assist in explaining how it is that metaphysical analyticity is supposed to ground linguistic necessity (Boghossian, 2000). While the proponent of metaphysical analyticity would not necessarily deny the traditional view regarding the dependence of truth on (i) meaning and (ii) the way the world is, he would suggest that, in the case of metaphysical analyticity, one does not need truth to depend on the way the world is because, in some sense, meaning creates the truth (about the world). Thus, on this account, our meaning p by S "*makes it the case that p*" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 365). This understanding appears to go some distance in explaining how statements could be metaphysically analytic, particularly in light of the fact that analytic statements were supposed to merely provide insight into the manner in which we use language, and hence express linguistic necessity. Through the very uttering of a statement, we are

[17] I take it that nothing substantial hinges on my description of truth here as a property of statements. One could substitute one's favourite theory of truth here- the point is simply that, on our usual understanding, truth involves both a linguistic component, and a factual component (i.e. some fact about the world).

demonstrating our conventional use of the constituent terms, and thus expressing the linguistic necessities concerning those terms. Here, truth can depend solely on meaning, and not on the features of the world, as it appears to 'create' the (linguistic) features of the world through the very utterance of the statement[18].

Unfortunately, Boghossian believes that the above account of metaphysical analyticity suffers from two fatal flaws (Boghossian, 2000). The first is the idea that, if one follows the account, it appears that truth of what is expressed becomes contingent. If one recalls that the analytic statements that were thought to couch linguistic necessities were in fact conceptual truths, as well as the truths of logic and mathematics, then one can appreciate the force of the objection, as these truths were supposed to be necessary. In light of this, the consequence that these claims are contingent, and not necessary, is surely unpalatable. Thus the claim against metaphysical analyticity is that, where it was supposed to preserve the necessity of the truths expressed, it fails to do so.

The second complaint against metaphysical analyticity is that, not only are the truths expressed contingent, but they appear to be contingent on the statement which expresses them being uttered. The implication of this is that truths are only created when statements are expressed[19], i.e. that prior to their being expressed, such truths did not exist. Boghossian's worry here is that it there seem to be a whole host of truths about the

[18] This point is reiterated and expanded in the Chapter 5 : Challenging Boghossian.

[19] I take it that the mode of expression need not make too much difference to the account- i.e. that it is plausible that expressing a statement could be through speech, or writing, or sign language, or even song. I think there might be some room for debate over whether *thinking* a particular statement means that a statement is created, and in particular whether thinking a statement is enough to count as expression of a statement (especially if one presupposes some kind of language of thought); but this is not a debate I want to get into here. The point is simply that, prior to the creation of the statement; the truth of the claim expressed by the statement did not exist.

world that would be true even before we uttered statements about them (which expressed these truths). To quote his example

> "Are we to suppose that, prior to our stipulating a meaning for the statement 'Either snow is white or it isn't' *it wasn't the case that either snow was white or it wasn't?"* (Boghossian, 2000, p 336)

The point is that we want to have true statements which are true (perhaps necessarily) in virtue of their correctly describing some feature of the world, and not (necessarily) true because our uttering the statement makes it so. Boghossian's suggestion here is that the notion of metaphysical analyticity commits us to some kind of creationism regarding facts about the world- i.e. that it is through our uttering statements that we create truths about the world (Boghossian, 2000). This he takes to be entirely unpalatable.

Turning now to the concept of epistemic analyticity, Boghossian interprets the logical positivists as using this notion to underwrite an analytic theory of *a priori* knowledge. On this understanding, knowledge of the meaning of the constituent terms justifies one in claiming to know the truth of the statement expressed (Boghossian, 2000). Once again, the heart of the issue concerns the relationship between truth and meaning. How then might a logical positivist have understood a statement to be epistemically analytic[20]?

What is at stake here is a question of mechanism – how is it possible that, solely in virtue of knowing the meanings of the constituent terms, one can be justified in knowing the truth of the statement expressed? One such plausible account is Frege's account of

[20] It is important to note that the logical positivists would not have spoken of epistemic analyticity (the term is Boghossian's); hence exposition of the concept of epistemic analyticity is restricted to the logical positivists' account of the analytic theory of the a priori. A detailed discussion of Boghossian's contemporary account of epistemic analyticity (i.e. his second phase of argument) is beyond the scope of this research report; but is a possible avenue of further research.

synonymy, wherein one can reduce an analytic conceptual truth to a logical truth through the substitution of synonymous terms[21](Boghossian, 2000). For example, one can turn the conceptual truth "All vixens are female foxes" into the logical truth "All vixens are vixens" through substituting the phrase 'female foxes' with the synonymous term 'vixens'. I believe that it is valuable to make explicit several of the assumptions on which this account rests. The first is that the fact that truths of logic can be known *a priori* does not need to be explained. This assumption stems from Frege's belief that there can be no epistemology for something as basic as logic (Orenstein, 2002). In other words, his belief is that one can simply take the *a priori* nature of logic for granted, and that this does not need to be explained[22]. The second assumption is that facts about synonymy must be known *a priori*. This assumption reveals Frege's contention that the nature of meaning is that it is transparent to competent users of a language, such that, any competent user of language will be able to discern whether two terms have the same meaning (Boghossian, 2000).

If one is prepared to make the assumptions that Frege makes, then it appears that, at least for some analytic truths, we can explain their *a priority* in terms of logical truths. Naturally there are questions over whether we are entitled to make these assumptions, especially concerning Frege's commitment to the idea that there can be no formal epistemological explanation of logic. However, for the sake of argument, I set these concerns aside for now in order to examine limitations of Frege's account.

[21] Boghossian refers to this as "Frege-analyticity"

[22] This is a contentious claim, and one which Boghossian tackles directly through his account of epistemic analyticity. While this is beyond the scope of the current paper, please see (Boghossian, 2000) and (Boghossian, 2003)

It seems to me that Frege's account suffers from two distinct limitations. In the first instance, it appears to satisfy the truths of logic in a trivial manner (Boghossian, 2000). Now, part of the problem here is that the account makes the assumption that there can be no explanation of the *a priori* nature of the truths of logic, i.e., that it "presupposes knowledge of logical truth, and so can't explain it" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 339). While Frege might not have found this problematic, it nevertheless means that there is a class of analytic statements which his account fails to justify, or a least justify in a non-trivial manner.

The second limitation of Frege's account is simply the thought that there are those analytic statements which do not seem to be reducible to logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms. The classic examples of the kinds of such statements are (Boghossian, 2000):

4.(e.) If x is taller than y, then y is not taller than x
4.(f.) If x has shape, then x is extended
4.(g.) Whatever is green all over is not red all over

The charge here is that substituting synonymous terms is not an adequate mechanism to explain how it is that such statements are analytic. What is needed is not just an account of how it is that these statements could be analytic, but an over-arching (and hence unifying) account of how it is that *any* analytic statement could be analytic. Boghossian thinks that a promising line of thought is that analyticity could be explained in relation to the idea of implicit definition (Boghossian, 2000).

4.2 Defending Epistemic Analyticity against Quine's dismissal of the Analytic / Synthetic distinction

Believing himself to have successfully disengaged the notion of epistemic analyticity from metaphysical analyticity, Boghossian now turns his attention to defending the notion of epistemic analyticity against Quine's attack on the cogency of the analytic / synthetic distinction (Boghossian, 2000). The focus of Quine's attack within *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* is on those statements which Boghossian terms 'Frege-analytic', i.e. those statements which can be reduced to logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms. Quine believes that, given that we cannot determine a non-circular definition of 'analytic', the phrase 'is analytic' has indeterminate meaning [23] (Boghossian, 1996).

It is worthwhile pausing for a moment to consider the implications of Quine's sceptical conclusion: what are the implications of claiming that the phrase 'is analytic' has no determinate meaning when applied to statements which we thought were analytic in virtue of their being able to be reduced to logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms? The effect of this is that the status of these statements is thrown into uncertainty. To claim that the phrase 'is analytic' is not cogent means that one cannot claim that there are any statements, aside from the truths of logic, which are analytic. If Boghossian is going to defend the notion of epistemic analyticity against Quine's argument for the intelligibility of the phrase 'is analytic', then he needs to show that Quine's scepticism is misplaced, given that the term 'analytic' has definite meaning.

[23] It should be noted here that Quine's focus of attack within Two Dogmas does not include the analyticity of logic. In fact, he assumes the analyticity of logic, in order to attack the class of analytic truths which are not logical truths.

Boghossian spells out two potential interpretations of Quine's scepticism towards the existence of those statements which are analytic in virtue of their being able to be reduced to logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms[24]. The first is what he terms a non-factualism about analyticity, which refers to the idea that the phrase 'is analytic' does not have any substantive content (Boghossian, 2000). Here is the definition of non-factualism about analyticity which Boghossian offers:

> "(NF) No coherent, determinate property is expressed by the phrase 'is analytic' (or, since these are correlative terms, the predicate 'is synthetic'); consequently, no coherent propositions are expressed by the form 'S is analytic' or 'S is synthetic'" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 340)

In contrast to a non-factualism about analyticity, Boghossian claims that the other way of interpreting Quine's scepticism about analyticity is that while the phrase 'is analytic' has coherent content; there is never an example of the phrase being instantiated (Boghossian, 2000). Here is the definition of the error-thesis which Boghossian offers:

> "(ET) There is a coherent, determinate property expressed by 'is analytic', but it is necessarily uninstantiated; consequently, all statements of the form 'S is analytic' are necessarily false" (Boghossian, 200, p. 341)

Boghossian's trouble with Quine is that he believes that one can only accept a non-factualism or an error thesis about analyticity if one is prepared to accept some form of meaning irrealism (Boghossian, 1996). In other words, accepting a non-factualism or an error thesis about analyticity depends on one not being committed to the idea that words or phrases have determinate meaning[25]. Boghossian's claim is that any form of meaning

[24] It appears as though Quine himself was rather vague as to which understanding of indeterminacy he was referring to

[25] There is a more extensive discussion of these ideas in the following paragraphs.

irrealism is unpalatable; hence one cannot go as far as subscribing to any form of scepticism about analyticity (Boghossian, 1996).

As I read Boghossian, here is a schematic outline of his proposed argument against Quine's scepticism regarding analyticity (Boghossian, 2000):

(b) Argument against Quine's scepticism regarding analyticity

1. $(NF \vee ET) \rightarrow \sim MR$
2. MR

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3. $\sim (NF \vee ET)$

Definitions:

NF = non-factualism about analyticity

ET = error thesis about analyticity

MR = meaning realism

The first premise articulates Boghossian's claim that accepting either a non-factualism or an error thesis about analyticity leads to one being committed to the idea of meaning irrealism. The second premise is simply the assertion that meaning realism is true, which leads us to the conclusion (by way of modus tollens) that neither non-factualism nor an error thesis about analyticity is true. The argument has a valid form; thus if the premises are true, the conclusion would have to be true. In essence, Boghossian's argument is a reductio ad absurdum of Quine's scepticism about analyticity, as it seeks to show that accepting the truth of the conclusion commits one to fairly unpalatable consequences[26].

[26]On the face of it, merely attacking Quine's conclusion seems to be a philosophically dubious means of defeating an argument- one might even go as far as to suggest that Boghossian is side-stepping the issue, and not engaging with Quine's arguments. Boghossian's argument seems to hinge on assumptions, and on the different assumptions which he and Quine hold, mostly concerning the status of meaning. I do believe, however, that there is evidence in Boghossian's later work to suggest that he believes that the problem with Quine's account lies in his claim that in order to genuinely understand a term, one needs to

While Boghossian's argument is not directly attacking the premises of Quine's argument, my suspicion is that Boghossian feels that there is something wrong with Quine's argument so that it leads to a false conclusion.

While Boghossian indicates that the above structure is the form which his argumentation against the both non-factualism and an error thesis about analyticity is going to take, in reality, his method of argumentation does not strictly adhere to this structure. While he ultimately argues that a non-factualism about analyticity does lead to a form of meaning irrealism, his attack on the idea of an error thesis about analyticity does not centre on the same considerations. As shall soon be demonstrated, the attack on the error thesis is more direct- at no point in his argumentation against the error thesis does he claim that accepting the error thesis leads one to be committed to an unpalatable form of meaning indeterminacy. Hence, for the sake of expositional clarity, it is best to tease the two arguments apart. In line with this, I propose this revised structure:

have a non-circular definition of the term. I believe that Boghossian's work on the Carnap-inspired notion of implicit definition goes some distance in explaining how it is that we can have genuine understanding of a term, while not being in possession of a non-circular definition of the term. See the latter sections of Boghossian's 1996, 2000, and 2003 papers.

(c) Master argument against the intelligibility of the phrase 'is analytic':

1. $\sim P \rightarrow (NF \vee ET)$
2. $\sim NF$
3. $\sim ET$
4. $\sim NF \ \& \sim ET$
5. $\sim (NF \vee ET)$

---

6. P

In the above 'master argument', P stands for the claim that the phrase 'is analytic' is intelligible. I believe that this far better represents Boghossian's style of argument. The first premise articulates his claim that claiming the phrase 'is analytic' is unintelligible leads one to accept either a non-factualism (NF) or an error-thesis (ET) about analyticity. The crux of the argument comes in the assertion that both a non-factualism and an error-thesis about analyticity are false[27]. This then allows Boghossian to move, through modus tollens, to the conclusion that the phrase 'is analytic' must be intelligible.

As alluded to above, the real crux of the argument is in Boghossian's assertion that both a non-factualism and an error thesis about analyticity are false. Before looking at the sub-arguments which he offers in support for these claims, it is perhaps best to think about what it would mean for a non-factualism or an error-thesis about analyticity to be false. If non-factualism about analyticity were false, then it would have to be the case that there was a fact of the matter as to which statements (or words, or expressions) mean the same thing. If an error-thesis about analyticity were false, then it would have to be the case

[27] The support for both of these assertions is provided below

that, not only does the phrase 'is analytic' have determinate content, but that this content is instantiated.

Here is what I believe to be Boghossian's argument in favour of the second premise of the master argument – i.e. his argument in favour of the claim that a non-factualism about analyticity is false:

(d) Argument against non-factualism

1. NF → ~MR
2. MR

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3. ~NF

What reasons does Boghossian have for thinking that the premises of this argument are true? Within the first premise, his claim is that a non-factualism about analyticity leads to some form of meaning irrealism. Non-factualism about analyticity means that the phrase 'is analytic' has no determinate content. In effect, this means that we are unable to label statements as analytic, as there is literally no fact of the matter about whether the statements in question are in fact analytic. Where we understand the phrase 'is analytic' to mean that we are able to reduce statements to logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms, we are unable to do so because there is no fact of the matter as to whether a statement is transformable into a logical truth (Boghossian, 2000). Boghossian makes the point that, if non-factualism about analyticity is true, then it means that either logic is non-factual, or there is no fact of the matter about which terms are to be considered synonymous (Boghossian, 2000). He maintains that, within his present

discussion, questions about whether logic is factual have been intentionally set aside; hence the only candidate for non-factualism is synonymy (Boghossian, 2000).

Under which conditions might it be that synonymy can be described as non-factual? Our intuitive understanding of the term 'synonymy' is that two terms are synonymous when they mean the same thing[28]; hence if synonymy were non-factual, it would mean that there was no fact of the matter about whether two words (or expressions) mean the same thing. Boghossian argues that there seems to be some contradiction in thinking that two individual terms can have determinate meaning, i.e. that there is some fact of the matter as to what each individual term means, but that there is no fact of the matter as to whether the two terms mean the same thing or not (Boghossian, 2000). I fully support his line of reasoning here, for surely if individual terms have determinate meaning, there must be some fact of the matter as to whether these meanings are the same. It appears that, if synonymy is to be considered non-factual, then one has to be committed to the idea that individual terms do not have determinate meaning. Thus a commitment to non-factualism about synonymy (and hence analyticity) leads one to a commitment to some form of meaning irrealism.

As mentioned above, Boghossian's strategy against an error thesis about analyticity is not centred on the belief that a commitment to an error thesis about analyticity commits one to some form of meaning irrealism[29]. Instead of this, his methodology is to directly attack the error thesis, i.e. he offers support for the third premise of the master argument, ~ET.

[28] It is worth pointing out that synonymy as I am using it here is both interlinguistic, and intralinguistic.

[29] It is worth noting that this is the case in spite of the fact that Boghossian claims that he will be arguing for the claim that an error thesis about analyticity leads to some form of meaning irrealism. This is the motivation behind the revision of Boghossian's argument.

Unlike non-factualism, an error thesis about analyticity would admit that there were facts of the matter as to which statements were capable of being transformed into logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms; however, it would claim that it would be false to claim that any of these statements existed. In effect, the idea is that, while it is theoretically possible that such statements exist, in reality, they cannot exist- in Boghossian's words "although there are determinate facts about what means what, it is impossible for any two things to mean the same thing" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 343).

In arguing against an error thesis about analyticity, Boghossian's strategy is to assert claims which he believes that Quine is committed to, and then show that, if Quine holds these claims, then he must be committed to the consequences of holding such claims (Boghossian, 2000). Ultimately, the consequences of being committed to such claims results in one being committed to the idea that it is possible for two things (i.e. words, expressions, phrases etc) to mean the same thing.

Boghossian's starting point is the relatively uncontroversial claim that it is possible "for two tokens of the same orthographic type to be synonymous" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 343). Here, 'two tokens of the same orthographic type' refers to two tokens of the same type of words – for example, the letters 'd' ,'o', 'g' are one token of the type 'dog', and the letters 'd' ,'o', 'g' are another (and the same) token of the type 'dog'. Boghossian believes that Quine has to be committed to this notion in virtue of his very definition of logical truth- i.e. "a statement is true and remains true under all re-interpretations of its components

other than its logical particles" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 343). Boghossian takes Quine to be committed to the idea that, if he holds the logical components of a statement constant, and simply replaces the remaining words of the statement in a uniform manner, one will be able to preserve logical truth. Thus Quine has to be committed to the idea of two tokens of the same word being synonymous (Boghossian, 2000).

Boghossian seems to be interpreting Quine here as only being committed to the idea that, what makes words synonymous is simply their actual, physical shape- i.e. the physical shape of their letters (Boghossian, 2000). In this manner, Quine seems to be able to accommodate the idea that words can be (physically) the same, without appealing to any underlying meaning. Boghossian is quick to counter this with an example of a substitution of orthographic tokens of the same type which do not preserve a logical truth through uniform substitution (Boghossian, 2000). The substitution of the non-logical components of the logical truth "No unmarried man is married" can result in the falsehood "No unilluminated book is illuminated" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 344). The suggestion is that one cannot simply rely on the uniform substitution of tokens of the same orthographic type, as this is not always successful in preserving logical truths. Given this reasoning, it appears that Quine has to be committed to some notion of meaning in order that two tokens of the same orthographic type can be synonymous.

After considering the possibility of two tokens of the same type being synonymous, Boghossian moves to consider the possibility of two tokens of different types being synonymous. Once again, his appeal is to Quine's very own commitments- for Quine is

committed to the idea that two tokens of different types can be synonymous if they are explicitly stipulated to mean the same thing (Boghossian, 2000).

How is one then to interpret the above concessions of the error thesis? In effect, the claim that two tokens of the same type can mean the same thing, and that two tokens of different types can mean the same thing if they are explicitly stipulated to do so, both count as exceptions to the error thesis. Both examples are instances of the notion of synonymy having determinate content, and being instantiated. In effect, these exceptions render the error thesis to be rather peculiar. As Boghossian writes:

> "Although there is such a thing as the property of synonymy; and although it can be instantiated by pairs of tokens of the same orthographic type; and although it can be instantiated by pairs of tokens of distinct orthographic types, provided that they are related to each other by way of an explicit stipulation; it is, nevertheless, in principle impossible to generate instances of this property in some other way, via some other mechanism." (Boghossian, 2000, p. 343)

The consequence of this is that, unless synonymy falls into one of the two classes of exceptions, it is not possible that the property be instantiated.

Where then does this claim leave the error thesis? It is evident that these exceptions to the error thesis weaken the very thesis itself, so that a proponent of the error thesis is no longer capable of making the strong claim that the phrase 'is analytic' has determinate content, but that it is necessarily uninstantiated (given that there are exceptions to this claim). Boghossian goes further than this, and claims that the only manner which he believes the (weakened) error thesis can be supported, is through the doctrine of meaning

holism. In essence, his claim is that it is unlikely that, within the same language, that two words which are independently introduced can have the same meaning, given that meaning is radically holistic in the sense that "what our words mean depends on *everything* we believe, on *all* the assumptions we are making" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 344).

Boghossian holds that the meaning holism argument in favour of the error thesis has the following form (Boghossian, 1996, p. 31):

(e) Meaning holism argument in favour of the error thesis

1. Meaning is radically holistic in the sense that what our words mean depends on *everything* we believe, on all the assumptions that we are making

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2. Therefore, it is very unlikely that, in any given language, there will be words of distinct types that mean exactly the same thing

It is important to note that Boghossian concedes that this form of the argument for the (weakened) version of the error thesis is valid; hence his critique of the argument has to be centred on showing the first premise of the argument to be false, i.e. on showing that meaning holism is an implausible (and hence false) theory.

What would it be for a theory such as meaning holism to be true? On Boghossian's construal of the thesis, meaning is not individually ascribed to words and phrases in isolation; instead the meaning which we ascribe to words and phrases depends on our entire body of beliefs and assumptions about the world (Boghossian, 2000). In this sense,

the meaning of a word or phrase is constituted through all its uses- and hence through all the beliefs and assumptions about the world which might feature in such uses.

Given this backdrop of meaning holism, Boghossian thinks that it is fair to conclude that it would be unlikely for two distinct types of words to mean the same thing (Boghossian, 2000). If this were to be the case then, on Boghossian's construal of meaning holism, two words of distinct types would have to feature in the same inferences and beliefs. While intuitively implausible, Boghossian concedes that, it principle, such a view might be true (Boghossian, 2000).

Boghossian then moves to make several claims concerning meaning holism, and the argument for the error thesis about analyticity. The first is that, even though in principle it may be possible for two words of distinct types to mean the same thing, there will always be some beliefs which discriminate between them, simply in virtue of their being distinct orthographic types- for example, there will be different beliefs concerning the shape of their constituent letters (Boghossian, 2000).

The second, and perhaps more pertinent comment, is that Quine seems to argue for meaning holism in the concluding sections of "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", long after the very possibility of there being statements which are transformable into logical truths through the substitution of synonymous terms has been dismissed; hence, the use of meaning holism to argue in favour of the error thesis regarding analyticity is distinctly ad hoc (Boghossian, 2000). More to the point, this argument could not have been the one

which Quine had in mind if he were arguing in favour of the error thesis (Boghossian, 2000).

The third point which Boghossian makes is that, if one were to allow the argument in the closing sections of "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" for meaning holism to count as an argument in favour of the error thesis, then one would have to accept the verificationist theory of meaning (Boghossian, 2000). This is a theory which is out of favour with contemporary philosophers.

Given this reasoning, Boghossian believes that he has successfully defended the notion of epistemic analyticity against the Quinean critique of the analytic / synthetic distinction.

Chapter 5

Challenging Boghossian

It is worth stepping back, and taking stock of what Boghossian believes he has accomplished so far. I take it that at this stage, prior to the development of his positive account of what it would be for a statement to be epistemically analytic, Boghossian believes that he has accomplished the following:

5.(a.) Defined the notions of metaphysical and epistemic analyticity

5.(b.) Dismissed the notion of metaphysical analyticity

5.(c.) Separated the notion of metaphysical analyticity from that of epistemic analyticity

5.(d.) Defended the notion of epistemic analyticity from Quine's arguments against the analytic / synthetic distinction

If Boghossian is correct, and all of the above have been achieved, then he has effectively rescued a precise notion of analyticity from Quine's critique of analyticity, and thus is free to develop a positive account of what it would be for a statement to be (epistemically) analytic without the fear of his account being dismissed simply because it seeks to explain the much-maligned notion of analyticity.

The remainder of this research paper is dedicated to a critical evaluation of each of the above four claims which I take Boghossian to hold. As suggested at various points during this discussion, if Boghossian's positive account of epistemic analyticity rests on both the successful disentanglement of epistemic analyticity from metaphysical analyticity, as well as the defence of epistemic analyticity from Quine's critique of analyticity, then it is of the utmost importance to determine whether he successfully achieves both, as failure to do so will render the very grounds on which his positive account of epistemic analyticity rests unstable. In what follows, I argue that while the distinction which Boghossian draws between epistemic and metaphysical analyticity is both viable and useful, the concepts are perhaps not as separate as Boghossian likes to think they are. I argue that much of this error stems from Boghossian's hasty and ill-justified dismissal of the notion of metaphysical analyticity. However, this ultimately does not effect Boghossian's defence of epistemic analyticity against Quine's critique of analyticity, as the arguments defending the notion of epistemic analyticity apply equally to the notion of metaphysical analyticity.

5.1 Discerning Epistemic and Metaphysical Analyticity: Two Concepts or One?

I believe that Boghossian is on the right track in defining two possible readings of the notion of analyticity - he appears to be engaging in good analytic philosophy through pointing out inherent ambiguities in our understanding of the phrase "true by virtue of meaning". The value of this should not be undermined, for it is through identifying and explicating these ambiguities that we gain insight into the logical positivist's reliance on

the notion of analyticity to ground both a theory of *a priori* knowledge, and a linguistic theory of necessary truth. The really useful work which Boghossian does here is alerting us to the fact that, while the positivists took the notion of analyticity to be single concept which played a role in several key theses, different readings of the phrase 'is analytic' help to tease out the different roles which the concept played in logical positivist thinking. On his understanding, part of the issue with the logical positivists was that linguistic necessity (underpinned by metaphysical analyticity), and the analytic theory of the *a priori* (underpinned by epistemic analyticity) were entwined- you could not have the one without the other (Boghossian, 2000). The ambiguity in the phrase "true by virtue of meaning" was thus useful to the logical positivists, as interpreting the phrase as a way of explaining linguistic necessity, would bring with it the analytic theory of the *a priori*. Distinguishing the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity thus explicates positivist thinking.

A possible objection which someone might raise is that the distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity is not genuine, and that there is no difference between the two concepts. If this were the case, then the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity would have the same content, i.e. they would be picking out the same thing in the world. However, I believe that such an objection would be ill-founded, as surely this is not the case: the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity have different content, and thus refer to different things in the world. In relation to the analytic theory of the *a priori*, the positivists did seem to be employing the concept of analyticity in an epistemic sense, as the purpose of the theory was to explain how it was that we

could come to have knowledge of *a priori* truths. Thus Boghossian's concept of epistemic analyticity captures the functionality which is needed in order to facilitate the analytic theory of *a priori* knowledge- it captures how it is that we can come to have this knowledge, i.e. through knowing the meaning of the constituent terms[30].

With regards to the linguistic doctrine of necessary truth, the positivists were concerned to construct a reductive theory of necessity (Boghossian, 2000). They wanted to explain the existence of statements which were not empirically verifiable, but which nevertheless had an appearance of being necessary[31]. As discussed in the opening sections of this research report, the positivists sought to explain necessity in terms of linguistic necessity, in order to avoid positing metaphysical necessity which they believed would have been at odds with their program of strict empiricism. As Boghossian construes it, the notion of metaphysical analyticity appears to capture the functional mechanism needed to express these linguistic necessities: where a statement is true in virtue of its meaning alone, its dependence on meaning alone reveals our conventional use of words and language. Thus linguistic necessity is expressed. Explaining necessity in terms of the meaning of a statement was thus both convenient, and useful to the positivists.

The proponent of the objection against the distinction between epistemic and metaphysical analyticity does have a comeback- and that is to suggest that the concepts,

[30] Of course, the actual process through which this is achieved is far more complex than simply stating that knowledge of the meaning of the constituent terms gives us knowledge of the truth of the statement expressed- this is the focus of the second phase of Boghossian's project, which is concerned with providing a positive account of how the notion of (epistemic) analyticity can show how *a priori* knowledge is possible. A critical evaluation of the mechanics of such an account is a further research avenue

[31] Examples of this are the truths of mathematics and logic, as well as other conceptual truths

while in principle distinct, are in practice not separable. On this understanding, while it might be possible to think of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity as constituting two separate concepts, in practice, use of the one notion brings with it the other notion in its wake. In line with this understanding, it would not be possible to have a metaphysically analytic statement that was not also epistemically analytic. Before evaluating the feasibility of this response, I want to turn my attention to Boghossian's dismissal of the metaphysical concept of analyticity: my thought is that Boghossian's dismissal of the metaphysical concept of analyticity, being both hasty, and ill-founded, overlooks a crucial element of metaphysical analyticity which also applies to epistemic analyticity. The result of this is that one cannot employ the concept of epistemic analyticity without employing the concept of metaphysical analyticity.

5.2 Defending Metaphysical Analyticity

I turn now to Boghossian's dismissal of metaphysical analyticity. As suggested above, I will argue that his dismissal of the concept is somewhat hasty, and that the interest factor of such a concept has been underplayed.

Boghossian's complaint against metaphysical analyticity rests on his interpretation of what he calls the meaning-truth truism (Boghossian, 2000). According to this principle, for any statement S:

S is true iff S means that p, and p

In essence, this principle expresses the dependence which truth has on both meaning, and facts about the world- truth is dependent on a linguistic component, and a factual

component[32]. Now, Boghossian takes metaphysical analyticity to be the claim that the truth of the statement is dependent on meaning alone, without any contribution from the facts (Boghossian, 2000). Boghossian argues that, given the meaning-truth truism, the truth of a statement S cannot be fixed solely in virtue of S meaning p- i.e. that metaphysical analyticity cannot make use of a notion of truth which depends on meaning alone. In other words, Boghossian wants to claim that, for any statement S, it is not enough for the truth of S to mean p, for surely it must also be the case that p (Boghossian, 2000). As discussed earlier in this research paper, Boghossian then moves to suggest that if the proponent of metaphysical analyticity accepts the meaning-truth truism (as one might expect that any reasonable individual might), then this commits him to some kind of creationism, for he would have to claim that, in some sense, his choosing to mean p by S makes it the case that p (Boghossian, 2000). In effect, Boghossian's claim is that accepting the notion of metaphysical analyticity means that we would have to accept the thesis that we create facts about the world through the uttering of certain statements. This has the further unwanted consequence of making the truths expressed by analytic statements contingent on their being uttered. Boghossian is quick to dismiss this thesis, and hence the notion of metaphysical analyticity, as ludicrous (Boghossian, 2000).

Central to Boghossian's argument against metaphysical analyticity is his use of the meaning-truth truism; hence it is to the scrutiny of this claim, and the implications of using such a claim, that I now turn. Boghossian's meaning-truth truism is so-called as it expresses our commonsense understanding of the connection between meaning and truth:

[32] Perhaps it would be more apt for the meaning-truth truism to be called the meaning-fact-truth truism, as this would better express the dependency on both meaning, and the facts

one cannot have truth without meaning. But the dependence of truth on meaning is only one part of the story- for truth depends not only on meaning; but also on facts about the world. In other words, our fundamental understanding of the nature of truth is that truth depends on meaning, and on the way the world is. Whatever your favoured theory of truth is, truth always involves a linguistic component, and a factual component- something which the language is referencing. A statement is hence true if what is expressed by the constituent terms in a statement mirrors the state of affairs in the world- i.e. the facts. On this understanding, truth is a property of statements[33], which implies that this property can only come to be instantiated once the statement is in existence[34]. Truth is certainly not a property of facts about the world- for surely one wants to claim that facts about the world are objective, and can only be evaluated on the basis of existence- either some fact of the matter exists, or it does not.

I fully accept Boghossian's construal of the meaning-truth truism, and believe that it has a useful role to play in clarifying the position which Boghossian takes. Boghossian believes that a commitment to the notions of both metaphysical analyticity and the meaning-truth truism leads one to the unpalatable outcome that "in some appropriate sense, our meaning p by S makes it the case that p" (Boghossian, 2000, p. 336). I take it that this is an ambiguous phrase which could be interpreted in two distinct ways. The first is quite trivial, while the second reading leads to Boghossian's idea of creationism.

[33] I here set aside deflationist theories of truth which claim that truth is not a property

[34] As suggested earlier, I suspect that there is some room for debate here over when the precise moment is when a statement comes into existence- for the sake of this paper, I take it that a statement comes into existence when it is uttered, but I am not against the idea of a statement coming into existence through other mean- such as through writing, or even, through thought. I will not argue for these claims here.

In the first instance, one could read the idea of 'our meaning p by S makes it the case that p' as our creating the truth value of the statement which has been articulated. This simply refers to the idea that, where truth is a property of statements, statements can only be true (or false) once they have been articulated. Truth, being a property of statements, can only be attributed to a statement when it has come into existence, as before they were uttered (or perhaps even thought), some element of the truth relation was missing. But this is a trivial point- essentially, what is being made explicit here is the understanding that truth cannot be attributed to facts or meaning; but can only be attributed to a statement when it comes into existence.

On the second reading the idea is that, given that truth is dependent on both meaning and facts about the world, in those cases where truth is thought to depend on meaning alone, meaning must be, in some sense, giving rise to the facts in order for truth to be established. It is not possible (on Boghossian's account) that there be truths which are dependent on meaning alone; thus if metaphysical analyticity is going to be an explanation of analytic truths, then meaning needs to create the facts about the world needed in order to adhere to the meaning-truth truism.

Many of Boghossian's arguments against this notion of creationism rest on the idea that what is being created are physical facts about the world. Given this assumption, it is easy to see why it is that he claims such an outcome would be so ludicrous, for surely it seems strange to think of physical facts about the world being created purely through our uttering certain statements, or through the ascription of particular meanings to certain

statements. It is certainly out of the ordinary to claim that, simply through our meaning p by S, or through our uttering S that we somehow create the (physical) fact p. However, there are examples of statements, made famous by Austin, in which the uttering of a statement creates a fact about the world (Austin, 1961). An example of this would be the declaration of war, in which (the president's) uttering "I declare war" changes a fact about the world. Prior to uttering the statement, the president's country was not at war with the other country in question; however, with the uttering of the statement, a declaration of war was made, and hence one finds that, through the very uttering of the statement, the two countries are now at war. In a case such as this, the very act of uttering a statement brings about a change in the facts about the world.

It also interesting to consider this case in relation to the meaning-truth truism: what makes a statement such as "I declare war" true depends on both the meaning of the constituent terms, and the fact that the president is, in fact, declaring war through his uttering the statement "I declare war". Clearly, this is an example of a statement where uttering the statement creates the facts about the world needed in order for us to ascribe a truth value to statement.

One needs to be cautious about the kind of fact being created here: this is not a physical fact about the world, i.e. a fact concerning physics and the physical composition of the world; but it is still likely to be a fact about the world[35]. While I am not suggesting that our uttering of certain statements has the capacity to create physical facts about the world,

[35] My understanding here is that physical facts about the world would be a sub-set of the set of all facts about the world

I am arguing for the claim that there are statements, where the uttering of these statements does bring about certain (non-physical) facts about the world. It is likely that such facts are facts about the relations between certain entities, or conventional facts. My suspicion is that, the above example of the declaration of war creates a conventional fact about the world. The argument in favour of this rests on the observation that, where the president's uttering of the statement "I declare war" would allow us to ascribe the truth value 'true' to the statement, my uttering of the statement "I declare war" would entail that the statement would have a truth value of 'false'. Much of this stems from the legal conventions which ascribe authority to presidents, and thus allow them to bring about war through uttering "I declare war", and which fail to offer ordinary civilians (such as myself) the opportunity to do so.

Regardless of the nature of the fact created, the point remains that there are certain statements which, through their being uttered, create a fact about the world which in turn allows us to ascribe the property 'true'[36] to the statement which was articulated. On Boghossian's construal of the notion of creationism, surely such statements can be labelled as being creationist, as the statement's meaning makes it the case that the statement is true. The president's meaning that he declares war through articulating the statement "I declare war" makes it the case that he has declared war, and hence the statement articulated is true. The existence of such innocuous counterexamples undermines Boghossian's construal of the notion of creationism, and affords one the opportunity of suggesting that creationism is perhaps not as bad or ludicrous as Boghossian thinks that it might be. I think that Boghossian's argument against

[36] Or 'false' if the fact failed to be created

metaphysical analyticity is in trouble if we have stripped his key premise, namely that metaphysical analyticity commits us to the notion of creationism, of all its bite.

In spite of the force of the above objection, I believe that there is a far more powerful and damaging objection to Boghossian's argument against metaphysical analyticity. For the sake of the argument, let us for the moment set aside the foregoing objection, and grant Boghossian his original understanding of the notion of creationism, namely that metaphysical analyticity commits us to a extreme form of creationism through which meaning, in some appropriate sense, creates physical facts about the world. How then might we object to this argument against metaphysical analyticity?

My objection is levelled against Boghossian's interpretation of metaphysical analyticity, and comprises of two strands. The first strand is the claim that Boghossian's construal of metaphysical analyticity could not have been the interpretation that the logical positivists were committed to; while the second strand is the suggestion that there is a far more reasonable interpretation of metaphysical analyticity which does not commit us to the unpalatable thesis of creationism. In light of these two arguments, I suggest that Boghossian's dismissal of metaphysical analyticity is both hasty, and ill-founded.

I think that, within the literature, it has not been properly appreciated that Boghossian's construal of metaphysical analyticity is one which the logical positivists would not have been willing to accept. Boghossian seems to be suggesting that the logical positivists had some kind of creationist approach to truths, i.e. that they held that linguistic truths, being

truths about our linguistic conventions, were created through our uttering of statements (and thus through our use of language) (Boghossian, 1996). Now, the fact of the matter is that this claim could be interpreted as being true of the logical positivists- they did believe that truths were created through statements being articulated. Indeed, it is perhaps fair to comment that for all statements, their truth can only be determined when they come into existence – i.e. through being uttered, or thought, or written down- and indeed, this is part of what was discussed in the previous objection. Being a property of statements, truth can only be ascribed to statements. What I see as an unfair charge is the suggestion that the logical positivists were somehow creating physical facts about the world through their uttering of statements. Surely the suggestion that the logical positivists were creating physical facts about the world would not have been something which they would have been happy to accept? It appears to me that it would be rather bizarre to attribute such a theory to strict empiricists.

In order to see why this would be the case, consider the role which the logical positivists thought that analytic statements could play in underpinning their linguistic theory of necessary truth. As strict empiricists, they saw linguistic necessity as the only possible way of grounding necessity- they were wary of positing metaphysical necessity, as the fear was that this would at odds with their program of strict empiricism in which as limited an ontology as possible would have been posited[37]. Necessity, for them, was a feature of 'innocuous', analytic truths, and while our conventional usage of language created linguistic necessity, they were surely not committed to the idea of creating

[37] The understanding here is that the ontology posited by the logical positivists would have admitted of physical facts, linguistic facts, and a limited range of abstract objects such as sets (Orenstein, 2002)

anything else outside of linguistic necessity. If anything, the facts that are being created here are linguistic facts which, although part of the world, are somewhat different from physical facts (such as making snow white). Whatever the interpretation which logical positivists would have given to metaphysical analyticity, surely it could not have been the case that this was one which committed them to the idea of creating physical facts about the world. Given this interpretation, I believe that it is fair to accuse Boghossian of committing the Straw Man fallacy against the positivists, as he is attacking a position which is a Straw Man, as it is a position which they themselves would not be committed to.

Taking up the second strand of my argument, how then are we to construe the notion of metaphysical analyticity if the interpretation of metaphysical analyticity which Boghossian offers is not congruent with the logical positivists? I believe that there is a far more reasonable understanding of metaphysical analyticity which accommodates both the logical positivists' position, and which does not have the problematic implication of committing us to creationism. I believe the key lies in considering the meaning-truth truism, and the relations which hold between the constituent components. Recall that the meaning-truth truism states that truth is dependent on both meaning, and on the state of affairs in the world (facts about the world). As I have suggested above, the problem with creationism (and hence Boghossian's construal of metaphysical analyticity) was that it suggested that the meaning component of the meaning-truth truism creates, in some appropriate sense, the factual component of the truism[38]. Note however that this relationship is not necessary in order to preserve the meaning-truth truism- all that truth

[38] I here set aside the prior objections which I have made against the problematic nature of this claim

needs is to be dependent on meaning, and on the facts. While it is important to acknowledge that connection between a statement's meaning and the relevant facts, i.e., that in some sense the meaning expressed by the statement refers to relevant facts about the world, it is certainly not necessary to be committed to the idea that meaning creates such facts. One can be committed to the idea of the meaning-truth truism without being committed to any notion of creationism, i.e. without any commitment to how it is that the factual component is created. Where S is true iff S means that p, and p, one can be committed to the truth of S, the fact that S means that p, and the existence of p without being committed to any theory about p's creation.

The point of the above discussion is that I believe that there is a more reasonable interpretation of the metaphysical analyticity which is both in line with the meaning-truth truism, and which expresses the notion of the statement being true in virtue of meaning. The key to this understanding is eliminating the problematic creationist relationship between meaning and the facts in the meaning-truth truism. The idea, suggested by Kathrin Glüer, is that for those statements which are true in virtue of meaning alone, their meaning suffices to determine their truth value (Glüer, 2003). In other words, although an acceptance of the meaning-truth truism commits us to the idea that there must always be a relevant fact of the matter to which the meaning of the statement refers, there is firstly no commitment to the origin of this fact, and secondly, the dependency of truth upon this fact is minimised so that such facts cannot make a difference to the truth-value of the statement. As Glüer writes: "Therefore, the facts … cannot possibly make a *difference* to the truth value of such a statement" (Glüer, 2003, p. 3).

While Glüer's interpretation of metaphysical analyticity both captures the idea of a statement being true in virtue of meaning, and eliminates the problematic notion of meaning creating the facts, I question whether this interpretation is really compatible with the meaning-truth truism. Glüer's interpretation of metaphysical analyticity minimises the dependency of truth on the facts to a point where the facts cannot make a difference to the truth. In effect, I believe that this entails that a change in the facts would not make a difference to the truth value which we ascribe to the statement- and surely this is not compatible with the meaning-truth truism (where the truth of a statement is dependent both on the meaning expressed by the statement, and the facts). Where truth is dependent on meaning and the facts, one would want to say that a change in the truth value could be brought about either through a change in meaning, or in a change in the nature of the facts[39]. Given that Glüer's account does not accommodate this, she cannot claim that it is congruent with the meaning-truth truism.

In spite of this shortcoming, I believe that Glüer does valuable work in setting out the kind of interpretation of metaphysical analyticity which avoids Boghossian's problematic notion of creationism. In fact, I believe that with suitable modification, one can turn Glüer's account into a coherent interpretation of metaphysical analyticity which accommodates the meaning-truth truism.

Let's be clear that we are seeking to provide an explanation of how a statement could be true in virtue of meaning, starting from the assumption of the meaning-truth truism, i.e.

[39] Quine makes this point quite eloquently when he writes " The statement 'Brutus killed Caesar' would be false if the world had been different in certain ways, but it would also be false if the word 'killed' happened to have the sense of 'begat'…" (Quine, 1951, p. 34)

that truth is dependent on both meaning, and on facts. I believe that a statement is true in virtue of meaning when the facts (on which the truth of the statement depends) are linguistic facts. Thus the truth of a metaphysically analytic statement depends on the meaning of its constituent terms, and linguistic facts. In virtue of this feature, the account is in accordance with the meaning-truth truism. It is important to note that the meaning of the statement's constituent terms in no way create the linguistic facts being referenced. These linguistic facts are created by our conventional use of language, and are not created through the single usage of a word. For example, there is a linguistic fact of the matter about the manner in which we use the term 'bachelor': we use the term 'bachelor' to refer to an unmarried male. This linguistic fact has been created through our conventional usage of the word 'bachelor', over time[40]. The truth of the statement "All bachelors are unmarried males" is dependent on the meaning of the term 'bachelor', as well as the fact that the meaning is referencing the linguistic fact that we use the term 'bachelor' to refer to unmarried males. As such, the statement "All bachelors are unmarried females" is false, given that the meaning of the term 'bachelor' does not correctly reference the linguistic fact that we use the term 'bachelor' to refer to unmarried males.

I take it that what this construal of metaphysical analyticity reveals is that, given an adherence to the meaning-truth truism, the nature of the facts on which the truth of the statement is dependent, effects the type of truth generated. Metaphysically analytic truths are those which are linguistic in nature, as the facts on which these truths depend are linguistic. In the case of synthetic truths- those which are justified on the basis of

[40] I here make no commitments as to how the conventional usage of a word is created; though my hunch is that it is through repeated usage across a community. This might account for the fact that, even within a language, different communities might come to have different conventional usages for a word

experience- the facts on which the synthetic truths depend (and which the constituent terms reference) are empirically verifiable. In other words, these are facts about the physical world (or physical facts). In a similar vein, I take it that we could have structural truths (such as the truths of mathematics) where such truths are dependent on the meaning of the statement's constituent terms, and structural facts. Similarly, we could have statements which are necessarily true, where the truths of such statements are dependent on the meaning of their constituent terms, as well as the facts holding across all possible worlds.

Why then, if it is possible that the nature of the facts directly influences the kind of truth generated, were the logical positivists content to simply cleave the scope of truths into two- i.e. into analytic and synthetic truths? In other words, how can this interpretation of metaphysical analyticity (and its implications) be congruent with the logical positivist's outlook? The answer lies in understanding the kind of facts which the logical positivists would have permitted. Being strict empiricists, the logical positivists were, for the most part, concerned to minimise their ontology to those objects which could be empirically verifiable. As such, they restricted their ontology to physical objects (those which could be found in the physical world), and some abstract objects (such as sets) (Weinberg, 2007). Linguistic facts were thought to be innocuous, and hence were permitted. They did not admit the abstract realms of structural facts, or possible worlds. As such, truths were either synthetic (based on empirical facts, and hence empirically verifiable); or linguistic (and hence dependent on language). For the logical empiricists, analytic truths encompassed all truths which were not empirically verifiable- including structural and

necessary truths. My feeling is that, in a philosophical age in which we appear to be more open to the idea of increasing the size of our sets of possible ontological entities, the suggestion that different kinds of facts generate different kinds of truth, should find favour.

Another point which is worth addressing is that I believe that much of Boghossian's hasty dismissal of the concept of metaphysical analyticity stems from his reluctance to have anything to do with the linguistic theory of necessity (which he believed was underpinned by the notion of metaphysical analyticity). However, I believe that it is possible to consider the above interpretation of metaphysical analyticity as feasible without being committed to the linguistic theory of necessity. The understanding of metaphysically analytic truths being dependent on both meaning and linguistic facts, reveals nothing more than our understanding of how it is that certain words are used. It makes no commitment to the notion of necessity, and is, I believe, compatible with contemporary notions of metaphysical necessity where necessity is grounded in possible worlds theory. I do not believe that this interpretation could be thought to underpin a linguistic theory of necessity.

I believe that this above interpretation offers a plausible alternative to Boghossian's construal of metaphysical analyticity. Boghossian's failure to recognise the existence of another interpretation of analyticity which avoids his arguments against analyticity entails that his dismissal of the concept was both hasty and ill-founded. The concept of

metaphysical can be defended in a manner which affords the concept some substantial explanatory power.

5.3 Epistemic and Metaphysical Analyticity: Entwined or Separate Concepts?

Given the above discussion, I believe that not only can Boghossian's distinction between metaphysical and epistemic analyticity can be sustained, but that the concept of metaphysical analyticity can be defended against his hasty dismissal of the notion. Conceptually, the notions are distinct, as they serve different functional roles within the respective theories which they underpin. The question which remains to be asked is whether, in practice, it is possible to appeal to the one notion of analyticity (e.g. epistemic), without relying on the other notion (e.g. metaphysical). Boghossian's position on the issue is clear- he believes that the two concepts are separable both in principle, and in practice. He writes:

> "One of the main points of this paper is that these notions of analyticity are distinct and that the analytic theory of the *a priori* needs only the epistemological notion and has no use whatsoever for the metaphysical one. We can have an analytic theory of the *a priori* without in any way subscribing to conventionalism about anything." (Boghossian, 2000, p. 336)

I believe that, through an appeal to the meaning-truth truism, and our understanding of linguistic facts, it can be demonstrated that the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity are not separate, but are in fact entwined. Consider again our construal of the meaning-truth truism:

S is true iff S means that p, and p

Now, on Boghossian's construal of epistemic analyticity- where knowledge of the truth of the statement is justified through knowledge of the meaning alone- it would seem that one could come to know the truth of S simply through knowing that S means that p. However, the prior discussion of the meaning-truth truism has alerted us to the fact that, in virtue of truth being dependent on both meaning and on the facts, knowledge of the statement's meaning can at best be only part of coming to know the truth of the statement. What one needs is to also have knowledge of the facts- i.e., one need not only to know that S means that p, but also to know that p obtains. However, what gives us this understanding is a statement being metaphysically analytic, for when a statement is metaphysically analytic, the truth of the statement is dependent on the meaning of the constituent terms, and the (linguistic) facts. In effect, this entails that one can never have epistemically analytic statements which are not also metaphysically analytic, for in order to have knowledge of the truth of the statement, one needs to know both the meaning of the constituent terms in a statement, and the facts which such meaning refers to. Given this, the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity, while in principle separate, are in practice entwined: there are not epistemically analytic statements which are also not metaphysically analytic.

Eric Margolis and Stephen Laurence (Margolis and Laurence, 2001) voice a similar, yet subtly different objection to this idea that the concepts are, in practice separable- i.e. they object to the idea that there are epistemically analytic statements which are not

metaphysically analytic[41]. Their objection seems to hinge on the notion of justification -they write:

> "After all, if p really is an independent fact that makes S true, then just knowing that S means that p couldn't suffice for the needed justification; one would also need to be justified in believing that p. In other words, so long as the truth of S isn't merely a matter of what it means, then grasping its meaning can only be (at best) part of the story about why one is justified in holding it to be true" (Margolis and Laurence, 2001, p. 294)

Essentially, their objection rests on an understanding of what elements are needed in order to be justified in knowing the truth of a statement - their suggestion is that it is simply not enough for one to know that S means that p; instead this needs to be supplemented with the belief that p (given that truth depends in part on meaning, and in part on facts about the world). In a similar vein to my suggestion, one needs both epistemic and metaphysical analyticity (in the case of analytic statements) in order to ensure that one not only knows that S means that p, but also that p exists. In other words, one needs to know that S means that p, and also have a belief that p exists in order to claim to be justified in knowing that S is true.

Boghossian's response to their objection centres on what he believes the crucial elements are in order to be justified in claiming to know the truth of the statement (Boghossian, 2003). He points out that what makes the claim "This is water" true is that the substance is H_2O, but that one need not know or believe this. On Boghossian's understanding, one can be justified in claiming that "This is water" in virtue of how the substance looks and

[41] Contrary to what I have argued, Margolis and Laurence believe that Boghossian is correct in dismissing the concept of metaphysical analyticity.

feels, without believing that it is H_2O (Boghossian, 2003). In essence, Boghossian seems to be saying that one does not always need to believe p in order for S to be true (where S means that p).

I'm not sure whether Boghossian's objection hits the mark. For one thing, the example of the claim "This is water" is certainly not an analytic statement, and is different in kind to the analytic statements which we (and Margolis and Laurence) have been considering. Secondly, while Boghossian might be suggesting that one does not always need to believe p in order for S to be true (where S means that p), there is still further justification which allows us to claim that "This is water" is true- such as the fact that the substance is a clear, flowing, potable liquid. The point is that while one might not need to be justified in knowing that the substance is H_2O in order to be justified in claiming to know the truth of the claim "This is water", one does have to know at least some of the other properties (even if these properties are not underling properties)[42]. Hence it cannot be the case that one does not believe p, as one has to at the very least believe *something* about p.

Thirdly, and perhaps more relevantly, I think that even if Boghossian's objection was successful, it would only be successful against a Margolis and Laurence style objection which was making a point about justification. My suggestion, which was that epistemic and metaphysical analyticity were entwined based on their reliance on linguistic facts, seems to be immune from Boghossian's attack.

[42] I want to avoid getting into a complicated debate here concerning the nature of essential or necessary properties- for the sake of argument, it suffices to say that one can know the truth of the claim "This is water" without knowing that it is H_2O

5.4 The defence of both epistemic and metaphysical analyticity against Quine's dismissal of the analytic / synthetic distinction

Having defended the notion of metaphysical analyticity from Boghossian's hasty dismissal of the notion, and having shown that there are no epistemically analytic statements which are also not metaphysically analytic, we come now to Boghossian's defence of epistemic analyticity against Quine's dismissal of the analytic / synthetic distinction, and must now ask whether his arguments in defence of the notion of epistemic analyticity extend to the notion of metaphysical analyticity. My suspicion is that Boghossian's arguments against Quine are successful, and that his defence of the notion of epistemic analyticity can easily extend to the notion of metaphysical analyticity.

Boghossian's arguments against Quine's dismissal of the analytic / synthetic distinction hinge on the idea that Quine's arguments are only feasible if one is willing accept some form of meaning irrealism. His arguments in defence of epistemic analyticity have little to do with the actual notion of *epistemic* analyticity, and more to do with the status of the meaning of the word 'analyticity' (i.e. whether this meaning is real and definite, or not definite, and hence possibly not real). Given that his arguments rest on the status of the meaning of the term 'analyticity', I see no problem in extending these arguments to the notion of metaphysical analyticity. And given the success of Boghossian's defence of the notion of epistemic analyticity against Quine's arguments, I see no reason why the same arguments should not be a successful defence of the notion of metaphysical analyticity.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This research paper has attempted to effectively tackle a contemporary response to Quine's dismissal of the analytic / synthetic distinction. Through the course of the paper, I explored some of the ideas around what it is to believe or know something, both of which were central to this discussion. I then briefly considered Quine's arguments, as found in his paper "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", before approaching Boghossian's response to Quine. The critical evaluation of Boghossian's response to Quine argued that Boghossian was mistaken in dismissing the notion of metaphysical analyticity. In addition, I argued that, if given a more reasonable interpretation, the notion of epistemic analyticity can have considerable explanatory power, and might be able to do some work in explaining linguistic truths. Beyond this, I argued that that the concepts of epistemic and metaphysical analyticity, while in principle separable, were in practice entwined- it is not possible that there are epistemically analytic statements which are not also metaphysically analytic. However this fact is ultimately not fatal to Boghossian's defence of epistemic analyticity, as the arguments in support of epistemic analyticity extend to metaphysical analyticity.

In short, this phase of Boghossian's project- in which he defends the notion of epistemic analyticity- is still to be deemed successful, even if there are some slight clarifications along the way (such as admitting the feasibility of the concept of metaphysical analyticity, and of the fact that there are no epistemically analytic statements which are not metaphysically analytic). The natural path of this research is to now approach the second phase of Boghossian's project, namely his positive account of epistemic analyticity, and evaluate how the fact that there are no epistemically analytic statements which are not also metaphysically analytic effects Boghossian's account. My suspicion is that this fact might go some distance to clarify Boghossian's account. As a closing thought, here is a (rough) sketch as to how this might be achieved.

Boghossian's positive account of epistemic analyticity hinges on the notion of implicit definition: it is through implicitly defining the meaning of the statement's constituent terms that we come to know the truth of the statement expressed. However, in light of the meaning-truth truism, we know that truth is dependent on both meaning, and the facts. Given our understanding (argued above), that there are no epistemically analytic statements which are not also metaphysically analytic, we can take such facts to be linguistic facts. Where such linguistic facts are usually our linguistic conventions, in the special case of implicit definition, these facts become the fact of implicit definition itself.

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