

essential predication “All men are animals”

empiricist popes Carnap & Schlick I suppose.

behavioristic criterion for synonyms Quine demands this

extensional equivalence

Claims

- no one has succeeded in finding a criterion of synonymy (p. 322)
- the concept of synonymy needs more clarification
- if you cannot find a term which is co-extensive with “synonymous”, you must refrain from calling “analytic” any statement in natural language.

Notes

They say “All men are animals” is analytic but “all men are bipeds” is synthetic

There is a similarity between the medieval dualists and the modern dualists:

“Both want to preserve the distinction between essential and accidental predication and both have drawn it obscurely”

Some hold that *analyticity* can be explained in terms of synonyms.

“The demonstration that “All men are rational animals” is analytic depends on showing it is the result of putting a synonym for its synonym in a logical truth”

I.e we can turn the expression “Every *P* is *P*” (which is logically true) into “Every man is a rational animal” by putting “synonyms for synonyms”.

White says he does not understand the word “synonym” and demands his opponents present him with a term which is extensionally equivalent to it.

But if synonymy is the condition, synonymy is empirical in the sense of *examining actual usage*, so then analytical statements are empirical after all!

An aside: the trouble is that we are dealing with *natural language*, the same issue would not arise in formal languages. But philosophers often pretend that natural languages are formal languages.

p. 323

Against “1. Analytic statements are those whose denials are self-contradictory”

Either this is taken formally or informally. If informally it is begging the question.

“self-contradiction” as inducing feelings of horror? Hardly, then sociology would be analytic but not mathematics?

“Once it is admitted that analytic statements are just like synthetic statements, only that they produce a little more of a certain quality - in this case the quality of discomfort in the presence of their denials - the bars are down, and a radical, gradualistic pragmatism is enthroned”

Against “If we were presented with something which wasn’t a rational animal, we would not call it a man”:

- this applies just as well to synthetic statements (coextensivity rather than synonymy)

Perhaps analytic/synthetic is simply “how quickly are we willing to revise our belief in a statement” on further evidence.

But this leads us to rest analyticity on the *contrary to fact* conditional.

White's point is not that words have different synonyms in different situations; it is that synonymy is a hazy concept to begin with (p. 329)

Futher reading

Goodman, "On Likeness of Meaning" (1949) Goodman, "The Problem of Counterfactual Conditionals (1950)"

Questions

Q. Why is the analytic/synthetic distinction important?

Q. Who are the "empiricist popes" (p. 318)

Q. Is "all men are animals" analytic in natural language? (p. 323)