

# ‘Two Dogmas’ — All Bark and No Bite? Carnap and Quine on Analyticity<sup>1</sup>

PAUL A. GREGORY  
*Washington and Lee University*

Recently O’Grady argued that Quine’s “Two Dogmas” misses its mark when Carnap’s use of the analyticity distinction is understood in the light of his deflationism. While in substantial agreement with the stress on Carnap’s deflationism, I argue that O’Grady is not sufficiently sensitive to the difference between using the analyticity distinction to support deflationism, and taking a deflationary attitude towards the distinction itself; the latter being much more controversial. Being sensitive to this difference, and viewing Quine as having reason to insist on a non-arbitrary analyticity distinction, we see that “Two Dogmas” makes direct contact with Carnap’s deflationism. We must look beyond “Two Dogmas” to Quine’s other critiques of analyticity to understand why the arbitrariness of the distinction threatens to undermine or overextend Carnap’s deflationism, collapsing it into a view much like Quine’s. Quine is then seen to achieve many of Carnap’s ends, with the important exception of deflationism.

## §1. Introduction

In his recent article “Carnap and Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (O’Grady 1999)<sup>2</sup> Paul O’Grady offers a reassessment of the impact on Carnap’s philosophy of Quine’s “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (Quine 1980, “Two Dogmas”). O’Grady argues that the generally received reading of “Two Dogmas”—in which Quine is understood to have vanquished Carnap’s empiricist epistemology—is mistaken. According to O’Grady, this received reading understands the main thrust of Carnap’s philosophy as a sort of empiricist foundationalism relying on the notion of analyticity to account for a domain of non-empirical truths knowable *a priori*, and on reductionist verificationism to explain how empirical truths are both meaningful and justified. It further understands Quine as successfully criticizing analyticity and reductionism, thereby critically undermining the position of Carnap and Logical Positivism

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<sup>2</sup> Henceforth I shall cite this work by page number only.

generally. O'Grady (in the spirit of other recent Carnap scholarship<sup>3</sup>) first offers a more sensitive interpretation of Carnap, claiming that Carnap's aim was not to defend empiricist foundationalism, but to espouse a sort of philosophical deflationism or tolerance with respect to traditional metaphysical and epistemological disputes. On this view apparently robust differences over fundamental metaphysical and epistemological issues are seen as differences in alternate linguistic frameworks; choice of which framework to adopt being a matter of pragmatic decision, as opposed to a judgment of truth.<sup>4</sup> O'Grady further argues that when Carnap's aim in defending analyticity is thus understood, and when we take into account his deflationary attitude towards analyticity itself, we see that Quine's "Two Dogmas" criticisms of that notion miss their mark.

In what follows I take issue with these two aspects of O'Grady's essay. First, although I agree in broad outline with O'Grady's emphasis on Carnap's deflationism, I feel he does not sufficiently distinguish between using the analyticity distinction to support metaphysical and epistemological deflationism, and taking a deflationary attitude toward the analyticity distinction itself. This unclarity disguises a slide from the acceptance of a relatively uncontroversial point to the acceptance of a highly controversial one. For, while one might well grant that a theoretically grounded analyticity distinction would yield a certain deflationism, it is quite controversial whether such deflationism can be maintained towards the analyticity distinction without compromising the overarching deflationism. Indeed, this point is directly related to my second criticism of O'Grady's views. I will argue that, in such places as "Truth By Convention" and "Carnap and Logical Truth", Quine presents arguments which show that a deflationary or arbitrary analyticity distinction either undermines or overextends Carnap's deflationism. Thus, Quine has reason to demand that Carnap provide a theoretically grounded analyticity distinction, and so the "Two Dogmas" arguments do in fact have some bite against Carnap's views.

I agree with O'Grady that the dispute between Carnap and Quine is deeper than simply the delineation of an analytic/synthetic distinction. As O'Grady makes clear, the dispute is ultimately over the nature and status of philosophy (as any dispute over the nature of the *a priori* must be), as well as the role of pragmatic concerns in inquiry. However, while O'Grady regards the

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Friedman (1987; 1988; 1991; 1994), and Creath (1990; 1991); for others see (Friedman 1991, note 2).

<sup>4</sup> There is a plethora of coincident distinctions at play (at least, a plethora of labels)—analytic/synthetic, framework/theory presupposing a framework, language/theory, linguistic commitments/theoretical commitments, (change in) meaning/belief, pragmatic decision/genuine judgment of truth. I will move between these as seems most appropriate. However, while I have to use these labels to discuss the supposed distinction, we should not allow their familiarity to obscure the fact that the distinction itself is at issue. See Chapter 3 of my (1999), as well as my (unpublished).

dispute over the status of philosophy as a “second-order” disagreement, apparently separable from the question of analyticity and the *a priori* (1025), I think that the questions of analyticity and apriority are constitutive of the deep philosophical question. Ultimately, as I will argue, Quine can agree with Carnap that the explication and examination of central commitments is a key role for philosophy—one in which it helps avoid terminological squabbles and promote scientific advance. They differ over the supposed deflationary status of this explicative task and its results—the status of (at least part of) philosophy. And that difference is directly tied to the difference over the analyticity distinction. Hence, through criticizing analyticity Quine is addressing the nature and status of philosophy.

## §2. O’Grady on Carnap

O’Grady urges that we understand Carnap’s motivation in defending analyticity as much deeper than the desire to defend a particular epistemological picture. Carnap’s primary motivation was, instead, to develop a method of deflating or defusing traditional philosophical debates. This deflationism, as O’Grady describes it (1021), is found in Carnap’s “Principle of Tolerance in Syntax” (§17 of *The Logical Syntax of Language*) (1937, 52), as well as in “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology” (1956, 214). Indeed, as O’Grady notes (1022-23), and as Friedman discusses in detail (1987, 525), this attitude toward metaphysics was present in Carnap’s work even from its beginnings in the *Aufbau*. Eventually, O’Grady argues, Carnap extended this attitude to epistemology and semantics. (1023) For Carnap, apparently robust metaphysical and epistemological debate is meaningless or at best misguided and unfruitful; philosophy has the special role of explicating proposed alternative frameworks and enabling informed choice on the basis of practical (as opposed to metaphysical or theoretical) concerns. Carnap is attempting to opt out of certain philosophical disputes altogether by claiming that their character has been misunderstood. The role of analytic statements on this view is to clearly lay out the rules or assumed preconditions of a proposed language. The decision of which analytic framework to endorse is not to be viewed as a judgment of truth or falsehood, for such theoretical judgments can be made only after the pragmatic choice of a linguistic framework. Traditional metaphysical, epistemological, and semantic disputes are, thus, deflated to the status of pragmatic decisions concerning clearly delineated alternative frameworks. This is supposed to benefit us in at least two ways—the avoidance of merely verbal disputes, and the advance of scientific investigation. (1024-25)

This more sensitive and more accurate understanding of Carnap shows the poverty of the received understanding. In particular, regarding the defensibility of analyticity, the stakes are much higher and more interesting for Carnap than just a particular verificationist epistemology and semantics. Carnap

needs a notion of analyticity which can support a distinction between purely pragmatic decisions about frameworks and theoretical judgments made once a framework is accepted. If such a conception is unavailable, then both the deflationary account of traditional disputes and Carnap's view of philosophy as neutral explication collapse. O'Grady's claim, however, is that this more accurate understanding of Carnap shows that the arguments of "Two Dogmas" fail to even address the real issue between Carnap and Quine.

### §3. O'Grady's Defense of Carnap

O'Grady sums up his analysis of Quine's "Two Dogmas" arguments as follows. Definition, synonymy, and necessity are inadequate to the task of clarifying analyticity, while semantic rules for artificial languages are ultimately arbitrary. Thus, any clear technical definition of analyticity is arbitrary, and not based on empirical grounds. Moreover, the arguments against reductionist verificationism and in favor of holism are supposed (a) to undermine the semantics implicitly presupposed by Carnap; (b) to show that no sentences are unrevisable; and (c) to eliminate the need for an empirically respectable account of *a priori* knowledge, thereby eliminating the need for an account of analyticity. (1018-21)

But, O'Grady argues, these arguments do not touch a properly understood Carnap. O'Grady writes:

However, if Carnap had another purpose, other than presenting a theory of *a priori* knowledge, there might well be a reason for making the [analyticity] distinction. And if he could argue that the distinction doesn't have to rest on empirical grounds such as behavioral or cultural factors, then he can evade Quine's arguments against the technical definition. Both of these are in fact the case. Carnap wasn't articulating a substantive theory of *a priori* knowledge, and he had a motivation which gave reason for a non-empirical drawing of the distinction. (1021)

The view encapsulated here seems to be the following. As discussed above, Carnap's main concern is to motivate deflationism. This gives Carnap reason to want a non-empirical way of drawing the analyticity distinction, for drawing the distinction empirically would involve taking sides in a potential epistemological or metaphysical dispute. It seems, then, that Carnap can rest comfortably with what Quine would call an arbitrary characterization of analyticity—that particular criticism loses its bite.

Similarly, O'Grady thinks, Quine's arguments against reductionist verificationism lose their bite. Regarding (a)—the rejection of reductionism—O'Grady cites a passage from §82 of *Logical Syntax of Language* in which Carnap embraces epistemic holism toward theoretical statements. So it seems that Carnap's conception of analyticity and the deflationism built around it are not tied to reductionist verificationism in the way Quine assumes (otherwise Carnap would be staking an epistemological claim, con-

tra deflationism). Regarding (b)—Quine’s claim of radical revisability—O’Grady rightly points out that, since Carnap is not concerned to defend a traditional conception of the *a priori*, he need not and does not hold analytic sentences to be unrevisable (as perhaps one might need to do in order to defend certain notions of *a priori* knowledge<sup>5</sup>). Thus, radical revisability, while perhaps striking at certain conceptions of the *a priori*, appears entirely irrelevant to Carnap’s deflationism. And regarding (c)—eliminating the need for an account of the *a priori*, and so eliminating the need for analyticity—O’Grady claims that Carnap’s aim is “other than presenting a theory of *a priori* knowledge” and “Carnap wasn’t articulating a substantive theory of *a priori* knowledge”. O’Grady’s point initially seems to be that, since Carnap’s concern is deflationism, and not accounting for supposed *a priori* knowledge, Quine’s holistic explanation of supposed apriority is simply not relevant to Carnap’s position. Hence, even if Quine’s criticisms of reductionism and advocacy of holism are cogent, they do not touch Carnap. (1025-26)

According to O’Grady, then, Carnap’s aim in defending analyticity transcends any particular epistemology or semantics. All Carnap need be able to do, claims O’Grady, is distinguish change in meaning (framework principles, language, set of analytic sentences) from change in belief (theory presupposing a framework, set of synthetic truths). O’Grady writes:

[I]n opposition to Quine, Carnap holds that there is a point to distinguishing between the framework presupposed by empirical knowledge, on the one hand, and that knowledge actually applied, on the other. This task is the special methodological preserve of philosophy. (1024)

With this distinction in hand, explication of frameworks can be carried out, and subsequent pragmatic decisions taken. The arbitrary nature of the distinction is actually desirable, for then exactly how to make the distinction is itself a matter of practical decision, and a deflationary attitude can be taken towards analyticity itself. O’Grady writes:

Criticisms of this meaning/belief distinction rest on the lack of a principled criterion for making such a distinction—that no empirical method can be found for making it. However, for Carnap, such a distinction is to be reached by agreement in a conflict situation. Maximise agreement on framework issues and situate disagreement on either empirically answerable problems or on questions of a pragmatic nature about the framework. (1026)

Hence, if the analyticity distinction (made in whatever way seems to fit the situation) is useful to philosophers and scientists in avoiding verbal squabbling and in settling worthwhile questions, then nothing more could be asked of it. (1024-25) Philosophy apparently maintains the role Carnap envisioned for it—that of neutrally distinguishing and clarifying analytic frameworks in

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<sup>5</sup> But see Friedman (1988; 1994).

order to separate pragmatic questions of framework choice from substantive theoretical questions, all the while deflating metaphysics and epistemology.

But it will pay to be more careful here. A number of issues require sorting out. First, while O'Grady is right that Quine's radical revisability thesis is directed against traditional conceptions of the *a priori* as certain and incorrigible (and so is irrelevant to Carnap), it also functions in the rejection of analyticity (and so, ultimately, of Carnap's conception of the *a priori*). For the point of radical revisability is not just that we can revise statements typically taken to be *a priori*—with this Carnap agrees. The further point of Quine's revisability thesis is that there is no principled difference between such unusual revisions and more common ones, hence (in Quine's view) no principled semantic or epistemic difference in the type of sentences revised. Citing extreme revisability and the globally applicable pragmatic concerns of conservatism and simplicity, Quine thinks that while some sentences will likely be the last to be considered for revision (and hence get labeled 'analytic' or '*a priori*'), they are not actually of a distinct status, since the same sort of considerations are involved in all revision decisions.<sup>6</sup> Thus, while on one vector Quine's holism is directed against traditional conceptions of the *a priori*, another vector is clearly directed against one way of marking the analyticity distinction.

Second, Carnap's espousal of epistemic holism towards theoretical sentences, in §82 of *Logical Syntax of Language*, is far from unproblematic. In one part of that section, Carnap sounds very much like the Quine I have portrayed, pointing out that both analytic and synthetic sentences may be revised in response to new protocol-sentences, and that the difference in such revisions is merely a difference in the degree of our reluctance to revise. Yet in the same passage Carnap maintains that there *is* a difference in the character of revision for analytic and synthetic statements. (1937, 318-19) If we hold, as Quine did, that our semantics and epistemology are two sides of the same coin, acknowledgement of epistemic holism seems the beginning of the end for analyticity, for it apparently implies a semantic holism with no room for analyticity. But as Ricketts points out, (1982, 123, 125) the holistic argument disqualifies only one possible criterion of analyticity. It seems Carnap can still hold that while we may revise an analytic framework in response to new protocol-sentences, this is distinct from the holistic disconfirmation and revision of a set of synthetic sentences. While in both cases pragmatic considerations come into play, only in the latter case, where the framework, and so the logical machinery germane to disconfirmation, remains undisturbed, can we be said to be making an empirically motivated judgment of falsehood.

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<sup>6</sup> It is not that Quine acknowledges *no* epistemic or semantic difference between sentences in a theory, but what difference there is fails to ground the analyticity distinction while being accounted for by Quine's holism.

According to Carnap, the former case, in which the framework is called into question, cannot properly be understood as disconfirmation, since this epistemic concept presupposes an analytic framework; thus only pragmatic concerns are relevant in framework revision. But, as Ricketts further points out, (1982, 125) this avoidance of Quine's holistic argument presupposes the availability of some alternate tenable distinction between framework and theory, analytic and synthetic—and this is just what is at issue. Thus, were it argued that no viable alternate distinction is available—and I shall maintain below that Quine so argued—Quine's espousal of epistemic and semantic holism is directly relevant. If, however, we provisionally assume the tenability of taking a deflationary attitude towards analyticity itself, then O'Grady's point seems to be well taken.

Third, unless O'Grady wants to commit to the claim that Carnap had nothing at all to say about the *a priori*—which would be inconsistent with his focus on deflationism—Quine's holism still stands as a competing account of the supposed *a priori*. So, whether or not we take holism to undermine the tenability of Carnap's view, it is clearly a competing alternative. When these points are taken into consideration, O'Grady's blunting of the bite of Quine's holistic arguments is far from obviously successful.

But what of the defense against the charge of arbitrariness—the claim that Carnap was not concerned to articulate a substantive theory of the *a priori*? What of the claim that Carnap was taking a deflationary attitude toward analyticity itself? To this I now turn.

There are two importantly different positions O'Grady is attributing to Carnap. (1) Supposed *a priori* knowledge is not *substantive knowledge*. This is the basic deflationary point—claims traditionally taken to be *a priori* are not subject to genuine judgments of truth, but merely to pragmatic decision making. And (2) this view on the supposed *a priori* is not, itself, a *substantive theory*. This is a deflationary attitude towards the deflationary approach itself, particularly regarding the analyticity distinction which underlies it.

O'Grady clearly intends to attribute to Carnap both (1) and (2), for each is part of his defense of Carnap. First, both (1) and (2), in virtue of addressing Carnap's deflationism, serve to redress the misunderstanding embodied in the received reading of his work. Second, (1) shows that Carnap was not interested in accounting for the *a priori* in any traditional terms such as certainty or incorrigibility, and it suggests that his conception of analyticity need not be linked to reductionism. Third, claim (2) plays the crucial role of enabling Carnap to sidestep Quine's charge that the analyticity distinction is arbitrary. Since Carnap takes a deflationary attitude towards even the analyticity distinction, where (and even whether) to draw the analytic/synthetic distinction is

not a theoretical matter, but a pragmatic matter, and we saw O'Grady making this point earlier.

While I agree with O'Grady that Carnap held both (1) and (2), I think O'Grady is insufficiently clear on the difference between these two claims; and this disguises a slide from accepting a relatively uncontroversial point to accepting a highly controversial one. While O'Grady makes a good case that Carnap both had the overarching commitment to deflationism and (eventually) took a deflationary attitude towards analyticity, he does not seem to consider whether the two positions are jointly tenable. That one is willing to take a deflationary stance towards the analyticity distinction and that doing so is in the spirit of one's overall deflationism do not imply that such a deflated or pragmatically determined analyticity distinction can support deflationism. While one might grant that a theoretically grounded analyticity distinction would yield a sort of deflationism, it is not clear whether a deflationary attitude can be maintained towards the analyticity distinction itself without undermining deflationism altogether. I will argue that Quine's discussions in "Truth by Convention" and related work give reason to think a pragmatically determined analyticity distinction either undermines or overextends Carnap's deflationism. Thus, "Two Dogmas", with its implicit demand for—and rejection of certain attempts at—a non-arbitrary, theoretically grounded, analyticity distinction, is entirely relevant to the overall debate between Carnap and Quine.

Before getting to this argument, it will be useful to take a step back and remind ourselves of just what is at stake.

#### §4. Reevaluating Quine's Critique

In developing the consequences of O'Grady's reading, we've wound up with a Carnap who sounds in some ways very much like Quine. That, in itself, is not a problem, for there are important similarities in their views; but what could be a problem is not being able to say where the crucial difference is. What is the difference between Quine's position at the end of "Two Dogmas" and Carnap's position as O'Grady has described it? Both acknowledge that the analytic/synthetic distinction, when drawn, must be drawn arbitrarily. Both acknowledge the revisability of statements typically taken to be *a priori* or analytic. Both acknowledge the holistic nature of theory in relation to evidence. Both see a role for pragmatic considerations when revising our commitments.

But here is where I will locate the difference. Carnap wants to distinguish questions of framework choice from theoretical judgments of truth and falsehood, and to portray questions of framework choice as purely pragmatic. The analyticity distinction marks off a preserve free of theoretical judgment and inhabited only by pragmatic concerns—a preserve in which a philosophy dis-



tinct from science survives to pursue its explicative task. In denying the distinction between framework and substantive theory—between analytic and synthetic—Quine is denying that we can distinguish sentences the acceptance of which is a matter of purely pragmatic decision from sentences the acceptance of which is a genuine judgment of truth. First, in Quine’s holistic view all acceptance or revision decisions involve pragmatic concerns to some degree. But Carnap need not deny this, for it is consistent with the claim he does need: that the acceptance of some sentences is a *purely* pragmatic decision—i.e., not at all a judgment of truth. But, second, Quine is maintaining that the acceptance or rejection of any sentence amounts to a judgment of its truth. Because, on Quine’s model, sets of sentences gain empirical content holistically, we must therefore accept or reject sets of sentences on the basis of global criteria—criteria which are both pragmatic and empirical. Hence, as all acceptances or revisions of sets of sentences involve both global pragmatic and global empirical concerns, there are no purely pragmatic revision decisions. That is, there are no sentences the acceptance or revision of which is a purely pragmatic decision.

These claims about Quine’s position, though helpful, can be somewhat misleading. For, in describing the outcome of his denial of a cluster of distinctions, I have had to maintain the terminology of the unwanted distinctions. This gives the impression that it is still sensible (from Quine’s point of view) to speak of the pragmatic as distinct from the empirical, the framework decision as distinct from the genuine judgment. But, of course, this is just what is being denied. It is perhaps more accurate to say that for Quine all acceptances or revisions of sets of sentences are judgments of truth taken with an eye to global empirical concerns, and global empirical concerns involve pragmatic components. As there is no isolating the pragmatic from the empirical concerns, there is no contrasting “merely” pragmatic decisions from “genuine” judgments of truth and falsehood. Pointing out that certain revision decisions seem to have a heavy pragmatic component does not make them any less substantive or theoretical. Such revisions are judgments about which theory to endorse.

Thus, from Quine’s point of view, there is no special preserve from which genuine judgment is excluded—hence, no preserve for a philosophy distinct from science. Moreover, because this distinction between pragmatic choice of framework and genuine judgment of truth is central to the deflationary account of metaphysical and epistemological disputes, upon rejecting it (at least some) metaphysical and epistemological disputes are, so to speak, reinflated. I insert the qualifier ‘at least some’, because Quine’s rejection of Carnap’s view does not reopen the way for all that has been called metaphysics. Indeed, much of the metaphysics Carnap wanted to avoid is still avoided by Quine. For Quine there is such a thing as “genuine” metaphysical dispute,

but it must have some at least remote holistic link to empirical implications and be driven by (if not simply identical to) our best physical theory.

This, then, is the heart of the disagreement between Carnap and Quine—whether there is a distinct role for philosophy and whether there is any “genuine” metaphysics. O’Grady calls this issue second-order (1025), but it depends directly on the question of whether there are sentences the acceptance of which is a pragmatic decision as opposed to a judgment; i.e., whether language and linguistic commitments are distinct and separable from theoretical commitments; i.e., whether an analyticity distinction can be made which will support the deflationary view. Thus, separating the question of the role of philosophy (and the status of the supposed *a priori*) from the dispute over analyticity can be importantly misleading. Note, as well, that this is not a simple question of whether some analyticity distinction (or other) can be made. O’Grady makes clear that what Carnap needs is to distinguish between change in meaning and change in belief, and argues that it is consistent for him to do so arbitrarily or pragmatically. While it may be consistent for Carnap to draw the analyticity distinction arbitrarily, this does not ensure that such a distinction will get him what he needs to underpin his metaphysical and epistemological deflationism. This point is very crucial to understanding Quine’s “Two Dogmas” criticisms. For, from Quine’s point of view, only a non-arbitrary or theoretically grounded notion of analyticity could support Carnap’s deflationist views. Let me expand on this.

If the analyticity distinction is theoretically arbitrary and can be made on the fly to suit our purposes, then Carnap’s program is either undermined or overextended, and it loses any power to deflate metaphysical or epistemological dispute. This is because, on the one hand, each sentence may either be considered a framework sentence and so accepted or rejected on the basis of pragmatic decision (and so not a genuine judgment of truth), or be considered a theoretical sentence and so accepted or rejected on the basis of a theoretical decision (and so a genuine judgment of truth), depending on how we make the analyticity distinction. We can deflate or inflate the status of any set of claims we wish. This is the sense in which the arbitrary nature of the distinction undermines deflationism. On the other hand, and perhaps worse, since the analyticity distinction is arbitrary, we could define the whole of a theory as analytic, in which case there is no meaningful distinction between analytic and synthetic, hence no meaningful distinction between *purely* pragmatic decisions and *genuine* judgments of truth. Whenever we felt a need to revise our theory, we would simply be engaged in pragmatic consideration of overall fit with observation.

These points have their seeds as early as Quine’s 1934 “Lectures on Carnap” (1990), as well as in the more critical revision of Lecture I, the 1936

“Truth by Convention” (1976b). The two pieces are rather similar. I shall focus on “Truth by Convention”.<sup>7</sup>

Quine begins by discussing definition, especially regarding the cogency of the Logicist project of reducing mathematical sentences to sentences involving only logical primitives. Such a reduction would achieve a number of ends. First, it would integrate one body of theory into another, thereby increasing the overall simplicity and perspicuity of the structure of both theories. Second, it would engender a sort of truth by convention for mathematics, though one which is dependent on the antecedent truth of logic, for the reducing definitions do not generate truths, but only translate them into the language of pure logic. Thus, the next issue is to make clear how logic, itself, might be true by convention. If it is, it must be so by a different sort of convention than that which was applied to mathematics, a sort of convention which does generate truths, rather than simply rewriting them. Quine offers up explicit postulation—first, definitionally minimize the primitive terms of the theory, and then define each primitive term by specifying truth-values for the sentences in which it appears. In the case of logic, this requires treating of an infinite number of sentences, so an axiom system and inference rules are adopted by convention. So, if mathematics reduces to logic, we will have made both math and logic true by convention. Quine also considers the possibility that some mathematical primitives (say those needed for geometry) may not be definable in terms of logical primitives. In this case, says Quine, we can simply follow the procedure of explicit postulation we applied to the logical primitives in defining the geometrical primitives. In such a case not all of mathematics reduces to logic, but all of mathematics is true by convention—some of it via direct linguistic convention, some of it via reduction to logic.

It is with this last point that our issue comes to a head:

But the method can even be carried beyond mathematics, into the so-called empirical sciences. Having framed a maximum of definitions in the latter realm, we can circumscribe as many of our “empirical” primitives as we like by adding further conventions to the set adopted for logic and mathematics; a corresponding portion of “empirical” science then becomes conventionally true in precisely the manner observed above for geometry. (Quine 1976b, 100)

The “empirical” truths are not reduced to logic, but are made true by explicit linguistic convention. There is no principled bar to this procedure, we can apply it to all of empirical theory. Quine reflects that this has dire consequences for the claim that logic and mathematics are true by convention. First, if we take this claim to mean that we can lay down postulates which generate exactly the recognized truths of logic and mathematics, then it is

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<sup>7</sup> The main difference is that the 1934 lectures are not only uncritical, but actually laud the conventional nature of the analyticity distinction.

empty, since the same can be said of any branch of knowledge. Next, if we take the claim to mean that we do, in fact, adhere to such conventions in logic and math, but not in other areas, then it is uninteresting (presumably because it leaves us uninformed as to the relation between our behavior and the possibility of making explicit conventions describing that behavior). Finally, if the claim is taken to mean that we actually engage in explicit postulation in logic and math, but not in other areas, then it is false. Still, Quine recognizes that there is a potentially important contrast to be drawn between the truths of logic and mathematics, on the one hand, and empirical truths, on the other. But he views this contrast behavioristically, as a matter of our differential willingness to revise, pointing out that this difference obtains prior to any thoughts of laying down explicit conventions. He then speculates that if we wish to cast logic and mathematics as conventional truths, and withhold that status from other truths, in order to forestall awkward metaphysical and epistemological questions concerning our insight into the truth of logic and mathematics, then “Such a characterization of logic and mathematics is perhaps neither empty nor uninteresting nor false”. (Quine 1976b, 102-103)

While not a full-out criticism, neither is this a ringing endorsement. Moreover, with “Two Dogmas” we get an epistemology which, by means other than analyticity or truth by convention, forestalls questions concerning our insight into logical and mathematical truth, and explains our differential willingness to revise in terms of the holistic semantics and epistemology. Thus, we are offered a compelling alternative to the arbitrary restriction of conventional truth to logic and mathematics.

The criticism that we can consider all of science as true by convention is pushed to its full extent in “Carnap and Logical Truth”, written in 1954. (Quine 1976a, esp. §§V-VI) Regarding the explicit and conventional adoption of (in particular, set-theoretic) postulates on the basis of pragmatic concerns of elegance and convenience, Quine writes:

And do we not find the same continually in the theoretical hypotheses of natural science itself?...For surely the justification of any theoretical hypothesis can, at the time of hypothesis, consist in no more than the elegance or convenience which the hypothesis brings to the containing body of laws and data.

...Hence I do not see how a line is to be drawn between hypotheses which confer truth by convention and hypotheses which do not, short of reckoning *all* hypotheses to the former category save perhaps those actually derivable or refutable by elementary logic from what Carnap used to call protocol sentences. (1976a, 121)

(Quine then expresses misgivings about the notion of protocol-sentences.) So, in “Carnap and Logical Truth” we do get a full-out version of the argument sketched above. In making the analyticity (or truth-by-convention) distinction, there is no principled way of stopping short of the whole of science,

and this overextension vitiates the deflationism Carnap is concerned to uphold.

Indeed, the consequences of both horns of this undermining/overextending dilemma are very similar to Quine's position at the end of "Two Dogmas", though this takes a bit of verbal squinting to see. On the overextension horn of the dilemma every sentence of the theory is taken to be analytic or true by convention, and thus, even though empirical fit is relevant, any revision is always a purely pragmatic choice regarding the whole of the theory (as opposed to a genuine judgment of truth). But of course, if every sentence is analytic, then there is no meaningful distinction between analytic and synthetic, hence no meaningful distinction between *purely* pragmatic decisions and *genuine* judgments of truth. We have only pragmatic decisions made with an eye to how the whole theory fits the observational data. That is, every sentence of the theory is epistemologically on a par, and thus any revision is always an empirical-pragmatic judgment regarding the whole of the theory; as such, every revision or acceptance carries metaphysical import. Thus, there is a sense in which Carnap's position collapses into Quine's, and the metaphysical deflationism vanishes.

On the undermining horn of the dilemma, any set of sentences of the theory may be circumscribed as analytic, such that revising those sentences counts as a purely pragmatic framework decision, and revising sentences of the complement set counts as genuine metaphysical judgment. As a result, the metaphysical import of any set of sentences may be deflated or inflated as we please. But, as above with the extremity of the distinction, so here with the variability of the distinction, the force of the contrast between *pure* pragmatic decision and *genuine* judgment of truth is entirely lost. What is being said is that any set of sentences of the theory may be circumscribed as protected from revision for as long as is desirable, while the complement set will be where we look most often to revise when revision is necessary. The protected status of any set of sentences may be invoked or revoked as we please. But this is just Quine's holism again. Where above the point was pressed that the whole theory is judged in the face of pragmatic-empirical concerns, here we see the other face of holism—that we can determine to hold fast to any smaller portion of the theory, and anticipate localizing our revisions elsewhere. But it is still the case that the whole theory is judged, and that such judgments carry metaphysical import. So, again, there is a sense in which Carnap's position collapses into Quine's.

Of course, Carnap can, and does, rejoin that while we *can* (in a given conflict situation) in principle make the analyticity distinction however we wish, we *will* make it in such a way as to codify those sentences held by the disputants to be most fundamental to their positions—i.e., those sentences such

that revising them would be counted by their adherents as a change in meaning. Carnap wrote, in “Quine on Analyticity”:

[The purpose of semantical rules is] the explication of an inexact concept already in current use. The rules denote a certain class (or, as I would prefer to say, a property) of sentences in  $L_0$ . This definition, however, is not arbitrary; we advance the claim that the defined concept embraces what philosophers have meant, intuitively, but not exactly, when they speak of “analytic sentences” or, more specifically, of “sentences whose truth depends on their meanings alone and is thus independent of the contingency of facts”. (1952, 430)

This is a direct response to Quine’s charge that the distinction is arbitrary. Carnap’s view is that the question of analyticity has a clear meaning only for a precisely specified artificial language, and that the task is to explicate common use of “analyticity” as well as possible in the artificial language. Because common use of “analyticity” is not entirely clear, Carnap cannot be required to exactly capture the common notion of analyticity in his semantical rules for an artificial language. Nor, apparently, must Carnap be charged with developing a non-language-specific conception, for it is only within a specific artificial language, say  $L_0$ , that a precise definition of ‘analytic-for- $L_0$ ’ can take place. Thus, all Carnap seems to need is to be able, in a given conflict situation, to claim that certain artificial languages adequately explicate the various disputants’ attributions of analyticity, and that this helps to avoid terminological squabbling while promoting theoretic advance.

But Quine is not, after all, against explication of theoretical commitments in the interest of these two aims. What Quine is objecting to is the claim that in explicating and earmarking certain sentences as “analytic” or “semantic rules” or “the last to go” we thereby confer a special status on them such that our commitment to them is of a fundamentally different type (pragmatic v. theoretical, analytic v. synthetic) than our commitment to sentences not so earmarked. That is, Quine is denying that Carnap’s chosen method of explication supports metaphysical or epistemological deflationism. As a result, Quine is denying the distinction Carnap made between philosophy and science. Moreover, though Quine might be able to countenance analyticity simply as an explicative tool, he offers an alternate semantic and epistemological view, and hence an alternate explicative style, which achieves the beneficial ends of explication, while explaining attributions of analyticity and apriority without invoking analyticity.<sup>8</sup> His holism is entirely consistent with and even goes some way towards explaining our differential willingness to revise. And it is entirely consistent with viewing explication as a (perhaps

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, there may be still other explicative styles which better avoid squabble and promote science. In his (1979, §8), Paul Churchland suggests that theoretical commitments can be fruitfully indexed along two continuous dimensions. Moreover, given how theoretically corrupt intuitions on this topic tend to be (much less how corrupt they are generally), it would be disingenuous to insist that intuition alone decide the style of explication.

*the*) useful tool for philosophers—though it would be clearer to say that explication is a particularly philosophical tool available to members of both philosophy and science departments.

### §5. Conclusion

It is important for understanding Carnap's views and his use of the analyticity distinction to set aside the received interpretation and look at his body of work. It is especially important, as O'Grady reminds us, to take into account Carnap's deflationism. Just so, to understand Quine's rejection of that distinction, and in particular to properly locate the force of the "Two Dogmas" arguments, it is important to set aside the received interpretation and to look beyond "Two Dogmas" to his other discussions of the issue.

I have argued that O'Grady's defense of Carnap fails to be sensitive to the difference between employing the analyticity distinction to support deflationism, and taking a deflationary attitude towards the distinction itself. It seems clear that Carnap eventually took both attitudes, but we cannot take it for granted that both can work together to support Carnap's overall deflationism. Indeed, arguments in "Truth by Convention" and "Carnap and Logical Truth" reveal Quine's deep misgivings about the arbitrary nature of the analyticity distinction. And I have argued that among these misgivings is reason to believe that, in being arbitrary, the distinction cannot support deflationism. Thus, the "Two Dogmas" argument that the analyticity distinction is arbitrary, as well as the argument that reductionism cannot support the distinction, make direct contact both with Carnap's doctrine of analyticity, and the use to which he puts it in his deflationism. Moreover, Quine has offered us an alternate view of language, theory, and the role of pragmatic considerations—a view which accommodates the goals of philosophical explication, and which explains attributions of analyticity and apriority without actually invoking those notions. Thus, the "Two Dogmas" discussion of semantic and epistemic holism is also relevant, not just as a rejection of reductionism, but in virtue of offering an alternative view which achieves much of what Carnap intended—with, of course, the notable exceptions of underwriting deflationism and distinguishing philosophy from science.

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