

The limits of method in analytical philosophy

حدود المنهج في الفلسفة التحليلية

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Abstract: This article deals with the method of logical analysis adopted by analytical philosophy and the way it is applied in dealing with some fundamental philosophical and logical themes, especially the problem of meaning. It discusses its relationship to the radical and deep change in scientific knowledge, focusing on the significance and the role of philosophical thinking in the light of scientific development. Finally, the aim is the attempt to give an objective evaluation by presenting a brief critique towards analytical philosophy and its logical approach.

Keywords: Method; Analysis; Logic; logical Analysis; Analytical Philosophy; Meaning

ملخص: يتناول هذه المقال منهج التحليل المنطقي التي تبنته الفلسفة التحليلية والطريقة التي اعتمد بها في التعامل مع بعض الموضوعات الفلسفية والمنطقية الأساسية، لا سيما مشكلة المعنى. ويناقش علاقة هذا المنهج بالتغير الجذري والعميق في المعرفة العلمية، مع التركيز على أهمية ودور التفكير الفلسفي في ضوء التطور العلمي. والهدف من هذا العمل أخيراً هو محاولة تقديم تقييم موضوعي من خلال عرض نقد موجز للفلسفة التحليلية ومنهجها المنطقي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنهج؛ التحليل؛ المنطق؛ التحليل المنطقي؛ الفلسفة التحليلية؛ المعنى

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Analytical philosophy is seen as a practice or method that is not intended to develop comprehensive theories of linguistic issues, but rather aims to simplify and clarify these issues through language analysis. This new approach has enabled many philosophers of language and linguists to deal with the subject of language from a new perspective, and this means that the analytical method, as formulated by Frege, Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein, has contributed to enriching philosophy, logic and science. In fact, it seems that many aspects of modern knowledge cannot be easily understood without revealing what could constitute a basic link or a connecting line between adopting the new logical method in analytical philosophy and the emergence of interesting results in different fields mainly in both logic and linguistics.

The concept of "analysis" has different meanings, it is sometimes related to deconstruction (Lalande, André, *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de Philosophie*, 2001, P.64-65), it means, transforming the whole into its simple parts, and sometimes is linked to the idea of a solution, i.e. proving the validity of an issue, based on a series of issues or proposals that collectively lead to the desired result, where moving to a new issue is necessary. The result becomes a logical outcome of what preceded it. Analysis in general is transforming the constructed whole that constitutes the studied subject into its simple or final parts, so that these latter become clearer, simpler and reasonable.

The types of analysis differ depending on the subject being analysed, the method in which the analysis is carried out, and the purposes for which it is directed. Its significance varies from one field of knowledge to another and from one context to another. It is "the dismantling of the given particular subject of study into its possible final parts, whether this analysis is physical, such as chemical analysis, or mental, as the analysis of a specific conception." (Lalande, André, *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de Philosophie*, 1991, P.54).

Variation in the meaning of "analysis" appears within multiple contexts such as psychology, sociology, literature, and even in empirical and formal sciences as well. In the field of mathematics, for example, there is more than one historical connotation for the concept of "analysis", which means that it is difficult to list all the meanings. The context of this research does not require delving into the various definitions. In contrast to analysis, there is what is known as synthesis, that is, the procedures used to link parts in order to form a complex whole which has a given meaning. In this context, we should emphasise that philosophical thought itself is synthetic. It tends to search for the truth of things by returning

them to the whole that represents its origin. The common truth, origin or principle that explains their existence and arrangement, which means that the system of parts is understood through the whole system.

It is obvious that it is impossible to separate completely the analysis from the synthesis, especially if we take in consideration the first mentioned definition of analysis. In this context, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714-1780) deduces that the process of deconstruction is equal to analysis and it includes implicitly synthesis, because the purpose of analysis is to reveal the constant system between parts, as it does not depart from the state of the existing links between them. In this sense, it can be said that Plato's Republic is an analysis of the idea of a just society, but at the same time, it represents an intellectual structure of a just society. In the same context, we can understand why René Descartes (1595-1650) combined analysis and synthesis in his four basic rules, mainly in the second and third rules.

Although that a given philosophy may be described as analytic, this is no more than a way of expression to determine its predominant feature, and this is what can be applied to contemporary analytic philosophy. It's no use carrying out a randomly classification, such as that established by Mohamed Abed Al-Jabri (1935-2010), for example, between oriental synthetic mind and Maghrebian analytical mind in Arab world, or as Ernst Renan's view (1823-1892) when he differentiates between eastern synthetic mind and a Western analytical Greek mind.

Analysis has historically been linked to philosophy as one of the most important characteristics of philosophical thinking, as the latter is not practiced without analysis. Plato's dialogues present Socrates as the founder of this method, especially the Platonic binary division that we find in the dialogue of Sophists, Parmenides, and the Politician. This division gives rise to the method of analysis and then synthesis. It allows presenting our ideas in an accurate and clear manner. Furthermore, it is fully suitable for demonstrating by simplifying or deleting extra terms, otherwise applying a procedure which has been known in philosophy as Occam's blade.

Aristotle employed analysis in several contexts, especially in his logical theory. In his Prior Analytics, he was interested in analysing analogy to the components that it involves, and in the Posterior Analytics, he was interested in analysing the proof into its simple elements. The value of analysis lies in bringing back what can be known about phenomena or facts to what

is simpler, in other words to the principles or axioms of knowledge. In philosophical concepts of David Hume or John Locke, to a collection of sensory impressions. According to Spinoza, the analysis ends with a group of simple elements from which the universe is constructed.

As for Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716), the analysis led him to talk about spiritual atoms or immaterial monads (Leibniz, G.W., 1961, P.107), which are neither divisible nor annihilated and which have no form. Thus, they are far from being a subject of natural science (Leibniz, G.W., 1986, p.1). However, the most important characteristic of Leibniz's contribution is that he had linked analysis to logic, which means historically establishing the method of logical analysis. For this, we find that Leibniz is the first who tried to formulate knowledge in a symbolic logical language in order to make it more accurate, clear and reasonable. He called for the use of a unified symbolic and comprehensive language, considering that philosophical differences will remain unless we employ a rigorous logical analytical method, but he did not mean to transform philosophy into a formal analysis of knowledge.

In contrast, we find that modern Kantians, the followers of the Marburg school, called for making philosophy as logic of science. Several philosophers such as Brentano Franz (1838-1917), Alexius Meinong (1853-1920) and Twardowski, Kazimierz (1866-1938) had tried to employ this method in philosophical field. However, it was widely adopted after the scientific developments by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, specifically in the fields of mathematics and logic. This goes back especially to Georg Kantor (1845-1918), Frege Gottlob (1848-1925) Peano, Giuseppe (1858 -1932) and Russell Bertrand (1872-1970).

This method was adopted in the fields of knowledge, to clarify and define meanings of words and phrases. This was achieved by reformulating and transforming phrases into others that are simpler, clearer, accurate and more appropriate to the intended meaning. The misunderstanding concerns the use of words results in particular from "certain similarities between the forms of expression in the different domains of language, and some of them can be removed by replacing one of the expressions with another, this can be called the analysis of expression forms." (Wittgenstein, IP, § 4.109, P.195).

Whatever is the purpose of analysis, "it represents philosophy or it is the whole philosophy." (Zaki Najib Mahmud, 1980, P.14). This idea is confirmed by Ayer Alfred Jules (1910-1989), considering that analysis is the essence of philosophy (Ayer (A. J.), 1981, P.66).

In fact, we can reveal the analytical aspect in all philosophies, despite their differences in employing analysis as a method. Contemporary analytic philosophers, from Russell, George Edward Moore (1873-1958) and Wittgenstein to logical positivists refuse to accept that philosophical function is to establish a complete, comprehensive viewpoint or to develop a general explanation of life and existence that illuminates science, art, morals, religion and politics. According to them philosophy is not a higher branch of knowledge that may be used as a tool for criticizing culture or an alternative to religion. With the exception of Russell, "Most of the philosophers of the logical-analytic tradition are undecided to treat public and private issues of life, cultural and applied problems, As if it does not belong to philosophical concern." (Morton White, 1975, P. 247). The question is: how does analytic philosophy deal with philosophical problems? Especially those basic problems posed by philosophy, which require an answer in a rigorous and systematic way. Eventually, this leads us to adopt, even if indirectly, a holistic and metaphysical position towards life.

Analytic philosophy answers questions by clarifying the language in which they are formulated. That is, it "analyses complex phrases and refer them to their simple elements. It investigates the significances of concepts and propositions and the content of the text in which they are used. The analysis aims to search for the foundations of proof; it means to determine its validity." (Peter Kunzmann, 2001, P.219). The subject of analysis is the field of language, in which the aim is not to discover new realities or expand knowledge, as much as to clarify our knowledge and avoid misunderstandings caused by linguistic ambiguity or by our ignorance of the logic of language. According to Gilbert Ryle "...philosophical concerns... should not increase our knowledge, but should correct the logical structure of this knowledge." (Peter Kunzmann, 2001, P.219).

In order to carry out this new philosophical task, the pioneers of contemporary analysis have found that an effective and a typical tool is symbolic or mathematical logic. Its concepts and rules which are characterized by accuracy and rigour can rid language of its ambiguity. In this context, the adjective "logical" is attributed to the method in order to distinguish it. From the start, the results of applying this approach are both valuable and exciting, especially with Frege, Russell, and George Moore. The matter did not stop there, that is, when considering "logical analysis" as a mere method, but rather became a philosophy in itself, and thus the concept of philosophy has a new historical significance according to historical and scientific changes. Hence, the philosophy became the logical analysis for language propositions.

"The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of philosophical propositions, but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear and delimit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred."(Wittgenstein, TLP, § 4.112, P.44). The purpose is not to reveal cognitive content of ideas, but rather to determine their logical structure ,therefore to identify links between their contents, so that it becomes so easier to distinct whether they are reasonable or not.

It seems that many language phrases carry meanings, but they do not. For example, if a phrase includes a word that does not refer to an existed thing in human experience, such as the word "essence," or it includes words that have real connotations and are composed according to grammatical rules, but are not subject to logical rules, as the following: "mind is an element". False propositions or pseudo-propositions contradict logic grammar for example: "Nothing itself does not recreate." (Moore, G., E., 1994, P.154). Questions posed by philosophy are meaningless (Is the number sacred?). Such sentences do not carry any meaning because they violate the rules of logic.

The insertion of analysis method showed that many of what philosophers considered to be problems that require searching for an answer are, in fact, nothing but misuse of language phrases. Therefore, the phrases of traditional philosophy preceding analytic philosophy are false and misleading. "Most propositions and questions that have been written about philosophical matters are not false, but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosophers result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language."(Wittgenstein, TLP, § 4.003, P. 83). Wittgenstein's analytical approach in his first philosophy is close to that of Bertrand Russell and Moore's idea that the basic function of philosophy is "the gradual and detailed analysis, criticism and clarification of ideas."(Mohamed El-Jabiri, 2002, P.103).

From a critical point of view, we can notice the transformation in logical analysis method, as it has become a goal rather than a means. It is no longer important what can be obtained from the results, as much as the method used. The increasing interest in employing symbols and logical rules has transformed philosophy not into an effective and dynamic activity, but rather into a closed and mechanical philosophy, governed by principles that cannot be

transgressed. Besides, the more clear and objective the language is, the more it is captive to the fixed and rigid patterns of expression, and thus far from the moving reality and far from the feeling of human being himself.

Taking that the purpose of the analysis is to distinguish between what has meaning and what has not, then this indicates, according to the premises of this position that the meaning is linked to one of the two parts: that is, to the analytical sentences and not to the other party (pseudo-sentences). But how is it possible to judge that the second part has no meaning? As this judgement must include an acceptance of a given meaning (such as, devoid of meaning or to be a violation of logic) and therefore this judgement falls into a kind of contradiction.

If we consider that clarity is a general feature or a condition that must be required for all sentences, then the meaning will be more like the background or framework that contains what has meaning and what has not, so that a clear feature represents (has meaning) and the unclear one represents (has no meaning). This correspondence between clarity and the implicit meaning is itself not clear. The result, according to this proposition, will be that we do not seek to what has meaning, but rather to what is clear, so we do not seek the truth, but what is more comprehensive than truth or what is outside its scope. This is so only if we consider that clarity is related to the object. But if clarity is linked to the mind, then this assumption is inconsistent with the logical analysis. As for the third case, when clarity is the result of the interference between the object and the mind or a dynamic interaction between them, then we will not need fixed rules dictated by the method on the subject. Therefore, the necessity for clarity should not be a justification for subjecting what has meaning and what is real to the criterion of clarity, even if we used not to deny that clarity is what should describe what has meaning, in contrast what is meaningless may be itself clear.

The judgment that all metaphysical issues are meaningless is based on an inductive process and it refers to specific cases or examples like those selected by some positivists such Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970) from the writings of Heidegger, Martin (1989-1976). The question that arises here is the following: is there any legitimacy for this generalization? If some metaphysical propositions are devoid of meaning, are they all subject to the same judgment? A question that Wittgenstein tried to answer from a logical perspective while dealing with the problem of induction but without reaching a convincing answer.

The justifications adopted by analytic philosophy are not sufficient to accept logical analysis as an alternative to philosophy, or to convert the latter to this logical method,

because the result of such procedure is the confusion between both philosophical and logical propositions. In such context, philosophy will be no more than a formal theory of knowledge. Furthermore, achieving a great results in studying the foundations of mathematics and in restoring order and consistency to scientific knowledge does not mean that logical analysis is the appropriate approach for different fields of knowledge, whatever their nature .

Although some of the pioneers in analytic philosophy consider this approach as an end to philosophy, it represents a rebirth of the philosophical thought from a new perspective. Hence, whatever the criticisms towards this approach, the value of it is more evident in important researches that will be achieved mainly in philosophy of language, linguistics and communication.

To conclude, we should not deny the valuable affect of analytical philosophy and its logical method, therefore we emphasizing that our universities have to give more importance to such philosophy in their program which is not the case. No one can underestimate the importance of what has been achieved through adopting the logical analysis approach by logical atomism, logical positivism, and the philosophy of linguistic analysis. Besides, the valuable achievements in the field of logic, and scientific method.

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