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Synthetic thinking meaning

A synthetic mind is future-oriented, holistic, focuses on long-term problem solving, without ignorance of emergent trends. Digital world is complex and ambiguous, though analytics is always important to break down the big problems/projects into small blocks, and conquer them piece by piece; however, given the real-world complexity and abundance of information, you will never have time to digest every piece of information or analyze every detail; you don't have time to learn everything as well. So what shall you learn first, and how can you integrate what you learn into a holistic and an objective picture, that depends on what you are trying to synthesize. The synthetic mind is rare but becomes more precious to overcome the silo thinking, biased decision making and solve the over-complex problems facing business and society today. The synthetic mind is more future-oriented, perceives "what could be," while analytics describes "what is." But Analysis is the breaking down of a complex system into pieces that are small enough to be understood, in such a way that you can reassemble them (as you broke them down) to gain a deeper understanding of "what is." Those individual pieces then give you a sense of "what can be." Synthesis is then the process of assembling those pieces in a different way in order to achieve "what could be" and based on that select "what should be". The synthetic mind tends to look at the system as a whole and not being part of a whole. Synthesis is about combining things into a whole. The digital world is hyper-connected and interdependent, a synthetic mind has the advantage to see it as a "whole." But before you can combine, you need to first do a logical, natural partitioning. The analysis is largely about partitioning. In other words, the Synthesis process should be pulling the Analysis process, just as the Analysis process is feeding the Synthesis process. The synthetic mind is more on the lines of problem-solving by taking a longer-term approach. Where analysis is concise analytic work, takes a short term approach, more looking at the root cause, look at the context in which it has happened, and then expanding into being a larger picture to solve larger problems, making it part of a whole wider world. Synthesis: place together; the combination of components or elements to form a connected whole. It is a nature digital thinking for hyperconnectivity. The synthetic mind can either understand emergent properties or create emergent properties. More often, analysis as a process ignores emergence. Hence, the emergent digital trends and accelerating changes make synthetic mind digital fit. It is very much the same way that divergent and convergent thinking are important for critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and intelligence, analysis and synthesis are important and complementary. Analytics vs. Synthesis: Analysis and synthesis, as scientific methods, always go hand in hand; they complement one another. One could perhaps go so far as to suggest that there's often a strong correlation between the two sets. The analysis is understanding the thing by examining it as parts. Synthesis is understanding a thing by examining it as a whole. Analysis without synthesis is a reduction. Synthesis without analysis is intuition. They should complement each other, the question is how best to combine them. Every synthesis is built upon the results of a preceding analysis, and every analysis requires a subsequent synthesis in order to verify and correct its results. So in terms of difference... they are the two ends of the line between understanding the parts and understanding the whole - very different but also equally and inextricably linked to the process of understanding, and both required when looking at the potential for and impact of change. In this basis, one can never be 'better' than the other, as both are equally necessary, in any case, Analysis is necessary to have knowledge of an argument, a situation, a problem. Synthesis is necessary to summarize understanding of it and to transfer information about it to others. They are interdependent and complementary to each other. They are invaluable intellectual processes. A synthetic mind is future-oriented, holistic, focuses on long-term problem solving, without ignorance of emergent trends. Analysis without Synthesis may be interesting or even educational but results in no improvement. A synthetic mind is a better fit for digital transformation. "Analysis focuses on the structure; it reveals how things work. Synthesis focuses on function; it reveals why things operate as they do. Therefore, analysis yields knowledge; synthesis yields understanding. The former enables us to describe; the latter, to explain." -Ackoff Semantic distinction in philosophy The analytic-synthetic distinction is a semantic distinction, used primarily in philosophy to distinguish between propositions (in particular, statements that are affirmative subject-predicate judgments) that are of two types: analytic propositions and synthetic propositions. Analytic propositions are true or not true solely by virtue of their meaning, whereas synthetic propositions' truth, if any, derives from how their meaning relates to the world.[1] While the distinction was first proposed by Immanuel Kant, it was revised considerably over time, and different philosophers have used the terms in very different ways. Furthermore, some philosphers (starting with W.V.O. Quine) have questioned whether there is even a clear distinction to be made between propositions which are analytically true and propositions which are synthetically true.[2] Debates regarding the nature and usefulness of the distinction continue to this day in contemporary philosophy of language.[2] Kant Immanuel Kant Conceptual containment The philosopher Immanuel Kant uses the terms "analytic" and "synthetic" to divide propositions into two types. Kant introduces the analytic-synthetic distinction in the Introduction to his Critique of Pure Reason (1781/1996, A6-7/B10-11). There, he restricts his attention to statements that are affirmative subject-predicate judgments and defines "analytic proposition" and "synthetic proposition" as follows: analytic proposition: a proposition whose predicate concept is contained in its subject concept synthetic proposition: a proposition whose predicate concept is not contained in its subject concept but related Examples of analytic propositions, on Kant's definition, include: "All bachelors are unmarried," "7 + 5 = 12," "A" and so forth. However, the a priori - a posteriori distinction employed here by Kant refers not to the origins of the propositions, but to the justification of the propositions. Once we have the concepts, experience is no longer necessary.) Examples of a posteriori propositions include: "All bachelors are unhappy." "Tables exist." Both of these propositions are a posteriori: any justification of them would require one's experience. The analytic/synthetic distinction and the a priori - a posteriori distinction together yield four types of propositions: analytic a priori synthetic a priori analytic a posteriori synthetic a posteriori Kant posits the third type as obviously self-contradictory. Ruling it out, he discusses only the remaining three types as components of his epistemological framework—each, for brevity's sake, becoming, respectively, "analytic", "synthetic a priori", and "empirical" or "a posteriori" propositions. This triad accounts for all propositions possible. Examples of analytic and a posteriori statements have already been given, for synthetic a priori propositions he gives those in mathematics and physics. The ease of knowing analytic propositions Part of Kant's argument in the Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason involves arguing that there is no problem figuring out how knowledge of analytic propositions is possible. To know an analytic proposition, Kant argued, one need not consult experience. Instead, one needs merely to take the subject and "extract from it, in accordance with the principle of contradiction, the required predicate" (A7/B12). In analytic propositions, the predicate concept is contained in the subject concept. Thus, to know an analytic proposition is true, one need merely examine the concept of the subject. If one finds the predicate contained in the subject, the judgment is true. Thus, for example, one need not consult experience to determine whether "All bachelors are unmarried" is true. One need merely examine the subject concept ("bachelors") and see if the predicate concept "unmarried" is contained in it. And in fact, it is: "unmarried" is part of the definition of "bachelor" and so is contained within it. Thus the proposition "All bachelors are unmarried" can be known to be true without consulting experience. It follows from this, Kant argued, that analytic propositions are a priori; there are no a posteriori analytic propositions. It follows, second: There is no problem understanding how we can know analytic propositions; we can know them because we only need to consult our concepts in order to determine that they are true. The possibility of metaphysics After ruling out the possibility of analytic a posteriori propositions, and explaining how we can obtain knowledge of analytic a priori propositions, Kant also explains how we can obtain knowledge of synthetic a posteriori propositions. That leaves only the question of how knowledge of synthetic a priori propositions is possible. This question is exceedingly important, Kant maintains, because all scientific knowledge (for him Newtonian physics and mathematics) is made up of synthetic a priori propositions. If it is impossible to determine which synthetic a priori propositions are true, he argues, then metaphysics as a discipline is impossible. The remainder of the Critique of Pure Reason is devoted to examining whether and how knowledge of synthetic a priori propositions is possible.[3] Logical positivists Frege and Carnap revise the Kantian definition Over a hundred years later, a group of philosophers took interest in Kant and his distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions: the logical positivists. Part of Kant's examination of the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge involved the examination of mathematical propositions, such as "7 + 5 = 12." (B15-16) "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line." (B16-17) Kant maintained that mathematical propositions such as these are synthetic a priori propositions, and that we know them. That they are synthetic, he thought, is obvious: the concept "equal to 12" is not contained within the concept "7 + 5"; and the concept "straight line" is not contained within the concept "the shortest distance between two points". From this, Kant concluded that we have knowledge of synthetic a priori propositions. Gottlob Frege's notion of analyticity included a number of logical properties and relations beyond containment; symmetry, transitivity, anonymity, or negation and so on. He had a strong emphasis on formality, in particular analytic definition, and also emphasized the idea of substitution of synonymous terms. "All bachelors are unmarried" can be expanded out with the formal definition of bachelor as "unmarried man" to form "All unmarried men are unmarried", which is recognizable as tautologous and therefore analytic from its logical form: any statement of the form "All X that are (F and G) are F". Using this particular expanded idea of analyticity, Frege concluded that Kant's examples of arithmetical truths are analytical a priori truths and not synthetic a priori truths. Thanks to Frege's logical semantics, particularly his concept of analyticity, arithmetic truths like "7+5=12" are no longer synthetic a priori but analytical a priori truths in Carnap's extended sense of "analytic". Hence logical empiricists are not subject to Kant's criticism of Hume for throwing out mathematics along with metaphysics.[4] (Here "logical empiricist" is a synonym for "logical positivist".) The origin of the logical positivist's distinction The logical positivists agreed with Kant that we have knowledge of mathematical truths, and further that mathematical propositions are a priori. However, they did not believe that any complex metaphysics, such as the type Kant supplied, are necessary to explain our knowledge of mathematical truths. Instead, the logical positivists maintained that our knowledge of judgments like "all bachelors are unmarried" and our knowledge of mathematics (and logic) are in the basic sense the same: all proceeded from our knowledge of the meanings of terms or the conventions of language. Since empiricism had always asserted that all knowledge is based on experience, this assertion had to include knowledge in mathematics. On the other hand, we believed that with respect to this problem the rationalists had been right in rejecting the old empiricist view that the truth of "2+2=4" is contingent on the observation of facts, a view that would lead to the unacceptable consequence that an arithmetical statement might possibly be refuted tomorrow by new experiences. Our solution, based upon Wittgenstein's conception, consisted in asserting the thesis of empiricism only for factual truth. By contrast, the truths of logic and mathematics are not in need of confirmation by observations, because they do not state anything about the world of facts, they hold for any possible combination of facts.[5][6]— Rudolf Carnap, "Autobiography", §10; Semantics, p. 64 Logical positivist definitions Thus the logical positivists drew a new distinction, and inheriting the terms from Kant, named it the "analytic-synthetic distinction".[7] They provided many different definitions, such as the following: analytic proposition: a proposition whose truth depends solely on the meaning of its terms analytic proposition: a proposition that is true (or false) by definition analytic proposition: a proposition that is made true (or false) solely by the conventions of language (While the logical positivists believed that the only necessarily true propositions were analytic, they did not define "analytic proposition" as "necessarily true proposition" or "proposition that is true in all possible worlds".) Synthetic propositions were then defined as: synthetic proposition: a proposition that is not analytic These definitions applied to all propositions, regardless of whether they were of subject-predicate form. Thus, under these definitions, the proposition "It is raining or it is not raining" was classified as analytic, while for Kant it was analytic by virtue of its logical form. And the proposition "7 + 5 = 12" was classified as analytic, while under Kant's definitions it was synthetic. Two-dimensionalism Two-dimensionalism is an approach to semantics in analytic philosophy. It is a theory of how to determine the sense and reference of a word and the truth-value of a sentence. It is intended to resolve a puzzle that has plagued philosophy for some time, namely: How is it possible to discover empirically that a necessary truth is true? Two-dimensionalism provides an analysis of the semantics of words and sentences that makes sense of this possibility. The theory was first developed by Robert Stalnaker, but it has been advocated by numerous philosophers since, including David Chalmers and Berit Brogaard. Any given sentence, for example, the words, "Water is H2O" is taken to express two distinct propositions, often referred to as a primary intension and a secondary intension, which together compose its meaning.[8] The primary intension of a word or sentence is its sense, i.e., is the idea or method by which we find its referent. The primary intension of "water" might be a description, such as watery stuff. The thing picked out by the primary intension of "water" could have been otherwise. For example, on some other world where the inhabitants take "water" to mean watery stuff, but where the chemical make-up of watery stuff is not H2O, it is not the case that water is H2O for that world. The secondary intension of "water" is whatever thing "water" happens to pick out in this world, whatever that world happens to be. So if we assign "water" the primary intension watery stuff then the secondary intension of "water" is H2O, since H2O is watery stuff in this world. The secondary intension of "water" in our world is H2O, which is H2O in every world because unlike watery stuff it is impossible for H2O to be other than H2O. When considered according to its secondary intension "water is H2O" is true in every world. If two-dimensionalism is workable it solves some very important problems in the philosophy of language. Saul Kripke has argued that "Water is H2O" is an example of the necessary a posteriori, since we had to discover that water was H2O, but given that it is true, it cannot be false. It would be absurd to claim that something that is water is not H2O, for these are known to be identical. Quine's criticisms See also: Willard Van Orman Quine § Rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction, and Two Dogmas of Empiricism § Analyticity and circularity Rudolf Carnap was a strong proponent of the distinction between what he called "internal questions", questions entertained within a "framework" (like a mathematical theory), and "external questions", questions posed outside any framework - posed before the adoption of any framework.[9][10][11] The "internal" questions could be of two types: logical (or analytic, or logically true) and factual (empirical, that is, matters of observation interpreted using terms from a framework). The "external" questions were also of two types: those that were confused pseudo-questions ("one disguised in the form of a theoretical question") and those that could be re-interpreted as practical, pragmatic questions about whether a framework under consideration was "more or less expedient, fruitful, conducive to the aim for which the language is intended"[9] The adjective "synthetic" was not used by Carnap in his 1950 work Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology.[9] Carnap did define a "synthetic truth" in his work Meaning and Necessity: a sentence that is true, but not simply because "the semantical rules of the system suffice for establishing its truth"[12] The notion of a synthetic truth is not the same as the notion of a synthetic statement, which is a statement that is true, but not simply because "the semantical rules of the system suffice for establishing its truth".[12] The notion of a synthetic statement is not the same as the notion of a synthetic truth, but some external statements also could be "synthetic" statements and Carnap would be doubtful about their status. The analytic-synthetic argument therefore is not identical with the internal-external distinction.[13] In 1951, Willard Van Orman Quine published the essay "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in which he argued that the analytic-synthetic distinction is untenable.[14] The argument at bottom is that there are no "analytic" truths, but all truths involve an empirical aspect. In the first paragraph, Quine takes the distinction to be the following: analytic propositions – propositions grounded in meanings, independent of matters of fact. synthetic propositions – propositions grounded in fact. Quine's position denying the analytic-synthetic distinction is summarized as follows: It is obvious that truth in general depends on both language and extralinguistic fact. ... Thus one is tempted to suppose in general that the truth of a statement is somehow analyzable into a linguistic component and a factual component. Given this supposition, it next seems reasonable that in some statements the factual component should be null; and these are the analytic statements. But, for all its a priori reasonableness, a boundary between analytic and synthetic statements simply has not been drawn. That there is such a distinction to be drawn at all is an unempirical dogma of empiricists, a metaphysical article of faith.[15]— Willard v. O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", p. 64 To summarize Quine's argument, the notion of an analytic proposition requires a notion of synonymy, but establishing synonymy inevitably leads to matters of fact – synthetic propositions. Thus, there is no non-circular (and so no tenable) way to ground the notion of analytic propositions. While Quine's rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction is widely known, the precise argument for the rejection and its status is highly debated in contemporary philosophy. 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In the book Quine presented his theory of indeterminacy of translation. In Speech Acts, John Searle argues that from the difficulties encountered in trying to explicate analyticity by appeal to specific criteria, it does not follow that the notion itself is void.[18] Considering the way which we would test any proposed list of criteria, which is by comparing their extension to the set of analytic statements, it would follow that any explication of what analyticity means presupposes that we already have at our disposal a working notion of analyticity. 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