Hume Problem, quasi realism, coherence theory and modal semantics

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Keywords: Hume problem, quasi-realism, modal semantics

Abstract: The traditional view is that Hume's causality theory is a regularity theory. At the beginning of the 20th century, Kemp Smith put forward naturalistic interpretation and advocated that there is a natural belief in cognition. Under the influence of Smith, there appeared "new Hume" who maintained realism and "old Hume" who opposed realism. The debate between them became "new Hume debate". This paper will briefly sort out the content of the debate of new Hume and point out several major problems faced by new Hume. Then we will discuss the AC system built by Blackburn and Hale's modification of the system. Based on AC system,we analyze the Frege-Geach problem faced by quasi-realism and the contradiction between the coincidence theory and the integration theory of quasi-realism. After that, this paper introduces the defense of moral coherence theory, and uses Putnam and Kripke's semantics to defend the defense. Then, this paper points out the problems existing in the defense of defense. Next, modal rationalism attempts to re integrate all the problems above, but we can still point out the problem of modal empiricism. Finally, I try to use modal empiricism to summarize all the problems of the article, and finally give a disappointed conclusion: Hume's problem is still unsolvable. This thesis involves the fields of traditional epistemology, modal epistemology, analytical philosophy, logic and philosophy of language. Taking Hume's problem as the starting point, this paper finally attempts to discuss the whole epistemology.

1. A brief overview of the contemporary "new Hume debate"

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the traditional view holds that Hume's causality theory is a regularity theory. This theory denies the existence of objective causality and only interprets causality as the regular connection between simillar objects, which puts inductive reasoning into crisis.

Kemp Smith, a Hume scholar in the early 20th century, first denies the previously popular extreme skepticism. According to Kemp Smith, reason denies that we can find and recognize external objects, but natural forces are ultimate, so they predetermine our view of the outside world. Although Hume admittes that what we can find, whether in matter or mind, or between matter and mind, is at most continuous uniformity, he also believes that in all these cases, we can also experience a feeling that restricts us to believe in the occurrence of causal happenings, which we cannot understand, and so to believe in what we variously entitle ‘necessary connection’, ‘force’ and ‘energy’. [1]

With the increasing influence of Smith's naturalism, philosophers’ interpretation of Hume's causality theory changed greatly. In the last three decades, the difference and opposition between the traditional positivist interpretation and this new naturalistic interpretation evolved into a debate between causal realism and anti realism. A group of scholars called the "new Hume theorists" [2] inherited and carried forward Smith's naturalistic interpretation. On one hand, they continue to oppose the traditional regularity theory or positivist interpretation; on the other hand, an interpretative position of causal realism advocates Hume to recognize and believe that causal force or causal inevitability exists in reality. These scholars include Donald Livingston, John Wright, Edward Clegg, Galen Strawson and others. The new Hume's realism is criticized and refuted by another group of scholars. People have launched a protracted debate around Hume's causality,, which is called the "new Hume debate".

Represented by Galen Strawson, he advocates the transformation of Hume's philosophy. Strawson believes that we cannot conceive or form an idea of something different from existing ideas and

impressions, but our inability to "conceive" does not mean that we cannot "assume". If something can be imagined, it means that it is possible for us to form a concept about it, and conceivable things must have specific impression sources. We can assume that the causal force exist in the external world, regardless of the possibility of causal force within the conceptual theoretical framework of Hume's skepticism.

John Wright focuses on demonstrating his realism position from the perspective of the natural belief theory. Like Smith, he tries to distinguish two theoretical levels in Hume's philosophy: the philosophical level and natural level. He pointed out that in Hume's philosophy, philosophical reflection can not deny the most basic common sense and the natural belief. On the contrary, philosophical thinking should eventually succumb to natural belief. Wright regards natural belief as the core of Hume's philosophy and believes that skepticism is compatible with this natural belief theory, while Hume's conceptual theory is doubted and denied because it can not accommodate natural belief.

The anti-realist Winkler defends the traditional theory of regularity. He criticizes that the new Hume theorists does not expand our vision of Hume's thought, but instead narrows it. Winkler believes that Hume discusses the necessary connection of cause and effect within the scope of conceptual theory, and uses conceptual theory to explain the content of what we can assume. Realists deny the existence of this mysterious connection, which is contrary to Hume's skepticism, and refuse to assert that the existence of the link is just in line with Hume's skepticism.

The quasi-realists tries to reconcile the positions of the two countries. Blackburn opposes realism and puts forward projectionism. He believes that although we do not have a definite concept of external objects, we can project our hearts into the world to form this concept. He explains that his projectionism as follows: "we project an attitude, habit or other commitment, which is not a description of the world". In such, we project the ideas formed by the mind into the world, but we regard the ideas formed by the mind as formed by the world itself. Blackburn applies his quasi-realism to all fields of philosophy. "We can hold a quasi realistic position on many problems and fields such as morality, mathematics, set, counterfactual conditions, mode and so on".

2. Limitations of the new Hume debate

Mackey calls the causal inevitability that distinguishes causal events from non causal events necessity$_1$, and the causal inevitability that ensures that causal reasoning becomes a kind of congenital reasoning necessity [3]. We call "the constant combination of similar objects" necessity$_3$ and "the inference of the mind from one pair to another" necessity$_4$.

1) Defects of regularity theory

Hume's primary goal in investigating the concept of causal inevitability is to find necessity$_1$. When investigating the characteristics of causal events, he finds three necessary conditions: proximity, continuity and constant combination, but he does not consider these elements able to provide a perfect concept of causality, so Hume has not answered the question of necessity$_1$. The theory of regularity holds that causality is the constant connection between similar objects, but it can not explain why Hume recognizes and insists on necessity$_1$ as the core connotation of the concept of causality. The theory of regularity emphasizes Hume's skeptical explanation of causality, but ignores his naturalistic explanation of "causal inevitability".

2) Defects of causal realism

The question of "whether there is an objective necessity" is not the fundamental problem, certainly not one that Hume's causality theory should pay attention to and deal with at all. Hume is concerned about the meaning in which philosophers should and should not use the concept of causality. As far as we can understand, the meaning of the concept of causality can only be the "constant combination of similar objects" we can observe and the natural habitual transfer of the mind we feel.

New Hume theorists usually try to weaken Hume's conceptual theory. They believe that there is " meaning tension " in Hume's thought, and try to resolve this tension with causal realism. However, we can resolve this tension by clarifying Hume's standard of meaning, without resorting to the position of causal realism.

New Hume theorists also prove their causal realism interpretation according to the natural belief theory in Hume's theory. However, Hume's natural belief theory states that people naturally believe that the emergence of one object will inevitably lead to the emergence of another object. This is the belief of causal reasoning. The belief of causal reasoning cannot be equal to the belief of "believing in the existence of objective inevitability".

3. The possibility of using quasi realism to solve Hume's problem

The interpretation of new rule theory and realism only interprets Hume from a theoretical level of Hume's philosophy. However, the two levels of naturalism and skepticism are not irreconcilable. Blackburn's Quasi realism provides a solution.

Blackburn points out that on the issue of causality, Hume actually states three contradictory theories: (1) we have no other ideas except those with antecedent impression sources; (2) There is no connection between "necessity" and "impression"; (3) We have a concept of "inevitable connection between cause and effect". Traditional positivist interpretation only insists on (1) (2) and claims that (3) is a incorrect point of view, while causal realists claim that (2) is not important. Blackburn pointed out that both views are biased. We have a third choice - Hume is a quasi realist.

Blackburn distinguishes two kinds of realism: superficial realism and ontological realism. On one hand, Hume is not a regular theorist, but a superficial realist; on the other hand, Hume is not a causal realist, but an ontological anti realist. This is quasi realism.

4. Construction of Blackburn's quasi-drealism

There are at least three positions of projectionism, and Blackburn adopts one of them, namely expression theory. It is mainly used in the field of morality, advocating the expression of the psychological attitude of judge of moral judgement knowledge. His quasi realism wants to construct a semantic theory of quasi realism to try to prove that moral judgement has truth value.

4.1 Construct a quasi-realist semantic theory

Let us imagine a primitive language without predicates at all, but with a propositional attitude, called E_{ex}. This language uses only two exclamations, "Hooray!" and "Shh!" to express an attitude towards anything. "Hooray" is used to express agreement and "Shh" is used for disagreement. We use | H! (x) | to refer the approval of (x), and use | B! (x) | refer objection towards (x) and use ";" to indicate that one attitude contains another. Therefore, the conditional sentence "If lying is wrong, it is wrong to let your little brother lie" can be expressed as:

H ! [| B! (lie) | | B! (make your little brother lie) |]

If anyone holds a condemnatory attitude towards lying, he must also condemn "let his little brother lie", otherwise there will be a conflict between the two attitudes.

Now, let us improve this original language. We can invent this kind of predicate by atttitude like H! or B!. Through this substitution, the attitude is projected into the world. [4]

4.2 Build truth value for value judgement

Quasi-realism tries to prove that we have the right to talk about the truth and falseness of a moral judgement. Blackburn believes that the most direct way is to define the best possible set of attitudes, which is called set M^*. If a value judgement expresses attitude m, then m is true if and only if $m \in M^*$.

4.3 Defense and system construction

Schuler and others question that this semantic theory does not have the correct logical form, such as:

$$\begin{array}{c} p \\ p \rightarrow q \\ q \end{array}$$

Blackburn uses his own semantic theory to describe:

B ! (lying)

H ! [| B! (lying) | | B! (making your little brother lie) |]

B! (making your little brother lie)

The problem here: is H! [| B! (lying) | | B! (making your little brother lie) |] equal to p → q?

Hale postulates that there can be the position of tolerance in addition to the positions of approval and opposition to an act.

In response to the above problems, Blackburn constructs a modal system of attitude proposition by borrowing Hintikka's set concept of "possible choice of morality" in attitude and content. Hale calls this system AC system. According to this system, Blackburn finally explains the effectiveness of reasoning.

As for Schuler's accusation that the semantic theory of quasi realism does not have an effective logical form of antecedent reasoning, Blackburn countered that there is no clear provision on what kind of inference has such an effective logical form. The deep semantic theory developed from quasi realism can be interpreted as having an effective logical form. [4]

p is regarded as a goal or ideal, which is realized in any perfect world. T!p expresses a tolerant attitude towards p, which is equivalent to ~ H!~ p or ~ B! p. Here, Blackburn takes the goal or ideal realization as the final test of logical consistency. He resorts to deontic logic to explain specific propositional attitudes, such as negative propositions, disjunctive propositions, associative propositions and hypothetical propositions.

Negative proposition: if a proposition H!p expresses the attitude of supporting p, then what ~ H!p expresses is to allow ~p. Therefore, you can use T!~ A to replace ~ H! A. Use H!~ A to replace ~ T! A.

Disjunctive or disjunctive proposition: Blackburn is represented by A & B and A∨B.

Hypothetical proposition: Blackburn further adopts Hintikka 's view of a set of "moral possible choices". Hintikka's theory can be represented by such a model set: a model set is an incomplete description of a possible world or possible moral choice. If a sentence set containing "should" and "allow" is embeddable, it is satisfied. This means that a sentence set L is satisfied if and only if there is a model system s, m∈s, and L is a subset of m. A model set m can be defined by the following rules:

If p∈m, then it is not ~ p∈m;

If p & q∈m, then p∈m, and q∈m;

If (∃ x) p∈m, then for some individual constant a, p(a / x)∈m;

If (∀ x) p∈m, and if a free individual item b appears in the sentence of m, then p (b / x)∈m;

P (z / x)∈m is the result of replacing the variable x in the variable p that appears in P with the individual term z.

Now Blackburn tries to put the attitude symbol H! and T! into modal system. A is a formula with complete structure, and H! A and T! A is also completely constructed. Suppose a sentence set L, where L contains sentences H! A and T! A. Let us define an ideal set L^* as the next approximation of set L.

(1) If H! A∈L, then H! A∈L^*;

(2) If H! A∈L, then A∈L^*;

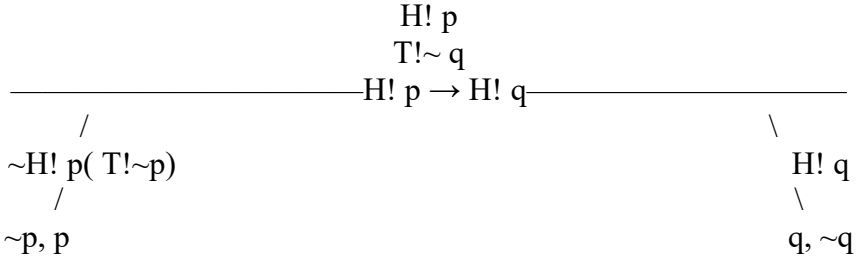
(3) If T! A∈L, then a set L^* containing A is one of the next sets approximating L;

(4) If L^* is the next approximate ideal set of a sentence set L, then if A∈L^*, the A belongs to all the approximate ideal sets L^{**}, L^{***}.

When the above rule is continued so that no new sentence does not belong to the elements of the set {L^{***}...}, the final ideal set {L^{***}...} of L is formed.

The following is the most critical step. Blackburn points out that we can understand the sentence set in this way: a sentence set L cannot be satisfied if and only if each path to a final ideal set S causes a sentence set in S to contain both a formula and a negation of this formula.

Now, consider the first mock exam system, the formula H! p & H! (H!p→H!q)→ H! q. We first make its negation: H! p & H! (H!p→H!q) & T!~ q. As shown in the figure:



As the formula H! p & H! (H!p→H!q) & T!~ q is contradictory, the formula H! p & H! (H!p→H!q)→ H! q is established. Now antecedent reasoning is restored.

4.4 Correction of the system

Hale points out the problems with Blackburn's AC system. [5] He puts forward a paradox: T! p→H! p, which can be interpreted as“I don't care, so therefore I support it”. This is a ridiculous conclusion, but it seems to be effective in AC system. He argus in this way: if you make its negation {T! P, T!, P}, then you will get {p, ¬p}.

There is yet another paradox: H! T! p→H! p. Proof: its negative is {H! T!p, T!, p}. And similarly, {p, ¬p}. This is also very absurd, which means that we should agree with p's tolerance only when we agree with p itself. He gives an example: you may insist on tolerating the National Front rally, but you don't insist on holding the rally. Let us analyze Hale's logic. The paradoxes he cites are that the former is tolerance and the latter is approval. In this way, when negating, tolerance does not change, approval changes into negation, and they contradict each other, so it is established.

Hale believes Blackburn’s rules should be limited. Only when A is not from T! so A can be repeated. He suggests modifying rule (4) to read: for any L^* generated from L, if H! A $\in L^*$, then A $\in L^*$. Hale does this to keep A from T! derived from H! derivation.

Let us think about what Hale wants to achieve. L^* is the approximation of L, so L^* is an ideal set, which is more ideal than L. Therefore, only proposition p of H!is qualified to enter the next set, because it is the ideal we agree with. But T!p is what we tolerate. It is not our ideal, but our compromise to reality, so proposition p of T! is not qualified to enter the next ideal set.

4.5 Frege-Geach puzzle

The Frege-Geach puzzle threatens Blackburn's projection theory. This problem was first systematically expressed by Geach, but it can be clearly traced back to Frege's distinction between semantic content and linguistic assertion. According to Frege, whether a sentence is judged or not has no effect on the sentence itself. Expressionism cannot explain why the following reasoning D is valid: Premise (1) lying is wrong; Premise (2) If lying is wrong, it is wrong to let others lie; Conclusion (3) therefore, it is wrong to let others lie. According to expressionism, the semantic content of (1) is only the expression of a certain attitude, that is, an opposition to lying. But in (2), "lying is wrong" is not the expression of any attitude as the precondition of a hypothetical judgement. In this way, "lying is wrong" in (1) and (2) has different semantic content and cannot form an effective inference.

In order to deal with the Frege-Geach problem, there are two ideas: ①The premise of effective inference must have truth value; ②The premise of effective inference must have sufficient relevance in content. Blackburn chose the latter.

According to the second idea, expressionists turn to try and meet the content requirements. Therefore, some corresponding function C must be introduced, which is the mapping from statement to expressive statement. Therefore, the corresponding inference is as follows: (1) C (lying is wrong); (2) If C (lying is wrong), then C (making others lie is wrong); (3) Therefore, C (it is wrong to let others lie). The moral proposition consists of two evaluation components. Both the antecedent and the consequent of a proposition express moral attitudes, and there can be no conflict between the two attitudes. An attitude is formed by a kind of moral discrimination. He explains discrimination as "a function from the input of belief to the output of attitude."

Blackburn did so at a price, that is, it is difficult to really capture the effectiveness of inference D. Although function C ensures that "lying is wrong" in premise (1) and (2) express the same content, the conclusion content of inference D is not included in the premise content in any logical sense. Blackburn believes that the above reasoning form is effective because it is "incompatible" to have a commitment to two premises and no commitment to a conclusion at the same time. In order to avoid this inconsistency, it is necessary to have a commitment to the conclusion.

Admittedly, we have restored inference D, but the problem remains that Blackburn still tries to defend his concept of "truth". Blackburn maintains that the meaning of truth in the field of expression and description is single. Blackburn introduces a "symbolic conditional sentence" CC:

"If I only form various beliefs through appropriate origins, and finally believe that there is a cat in the garden, then there is a cat in the garden; if it is also true and I believe that there is no cat, then there is no cat."

This topic, meaning equivalence, adds "true" after assertion p, and does not add anything new because of the attribute of transparency. So CC equals CC^*:

"If I only form various beliefs through appropriate origins and finally believe that there is a cat in the garden, then there is a cat in the garden is true."

Thus, CC can be regarded as the definition of the concept of truth.

We introduce coherence CC^{**}:

"If I only form a belief with the right origin and eventually believe that there is a cat in the garden, then the belief that there is a cat in the garden is part of some kind of best belief system."

Blackburn links CC with "compliance". The causality theory of the world is the truth component of conditional sentences, and the belief in fact is not truth. However, Blackburn soon found that "conformity" was not necessary in the moral field. Because values, virtues, obligations, responsibilities and goodness in the moral field are the products of spiritual feelings, “it is wrong to beat people” does not need to be stimulated by cause and effect. A hardline empiricist Carnap has a unique origin V_c, and a hardline Catholic Newman may choose a slightly different origin V_n. Then:

If a belief has V_c, it belongs to V^*_c.

If a belief is V_n, it belongs to V^*_n.

Each is harmless, and Carnap and Newman believe it. But in doing so, knowledge shows that they fail to grasp the real difference, that is, Carnap believes that a belief is true if it has V_C and no other characteristics. Newman doesn't believe that. Just as in the case of moral differences, if there are differences on the correct standard, then we cannot regard the debater as the standard that everyone has his own given concept of truth. Blackburn soon found that "conformity" is unnecessary in the moral field, because in the moral field, values, virtues, obligations, responsibilities and goodness are spiritual feelings, "beating people is wrong" does not need to be beaten to produce causal stimulation.

Therefore, Blackburn turned his attention to "Judgement success", which is understood according to membership of the integrated, comprehensive and controlled system (CCC). The so-called comprehensiveness is to emphasize the integrity of truth without omission; Controlled. It is to ensure that fantasy is eliminated and faith is controlled by the world. "Conformity" is a way of guarantee.

"If I only believe in an orthodox origin and eventually believe in a cat in the garden, then there is a cat in the garden."

However, even the CCC system cannot define truth: coherence theorists cannot express membership of a CCC system as something like truth. "Truth may belong to a naturally controlled, coherent and comprehensive belief system", which means that it also may not belong to such a system.

Finally, Blackburn admits that his theory leads to "no accurate definition of truth".

4.6 Moral coherence theory and moral entity

We talk about Blackburn's CC and CCC system in the last section. The moral relativism represented by Blackburn believes that we may have a coincidence truth in the field of experience, and a coherence truth in the field of morality. Generally speaking, quasi-realism holds that the truth of a belief in our empirical science and daily discourse lies in its conformity with the facts, while the truth of a moral judgment lies in its integration with our attitude system. This means separating the

"truth" of experience from the "truth" of morality, and a separated world is undoubtedly suspicious. We can never classify the true attribute of morality as the same as the proposition of "1+1=2". The true attribute of morality is obviously different from the scientific conclusion.

Therefore, to legally assert a moral proposition, we only need to integrate it with a series of other propositions in our belief system. Nagel has a similar position, that is, he believes that there is moral truth, but there is no moral attribute that an object can have. This is similar to the daily process of moral reflection. When considering a new moral proposition, we will consider whether it can be well integrated into our original moral system, rather than just relying on trivial moral intuition to find out whether it has a certain moral attribute.

If we abandon the moral entity, how will we know the moral truth? Scanlon believes that we can get reliable answers through serious moral discussions in the field. When discussing the desirability of Nazism, we will give our own normative reasons to support our views. For the given normative reasons, we can give further normative reasons. When we reach a final consensus after in-depth discussion, we will get a moral truth [6].

The question at this point is, can we finally reach some kind of consensus? Hume can still question. If we do have some normative formulas, especially within a national or cultural collective, we have formed some complete moral systems. On the other hand, scientific theory is indeed inseparable from some normative knowledge [7]. Therefore, in this sense, moral knowledge and scientific knowledge advance and retreat together.

But can this overcome Hume's problem? For example: brain in a VAT? This also designs the problem of language philosophy. According to the theory of semantic externalism, our semantics is determined by what is external to us [8]. For example, Putnam believes that it is not only the state of the speaker, but also others and the world that determines the meaning of the speaker's words, which is usually ignored by traditional language philosophy. Every language community shows the division of language labor, and the standard of words is in the hands of experts. This shows that the meaning of language is not determined by the individual psychological state, nor by the collective psychology of the community, but by the division of labor of language. So how do we get the meaning of words from experts? Putnam borrowed Kripke's causal reference theory. However, the theory of causal reference has still been questioned by many philosophers. For example, it cannot explain the existence of empty words and the word "Santa Claus"who is a virtual character. Therefore, we still cannot prove the external world.

5. Solutions and problems of modal Epistemology

Blackburn's problem is that the judgement of empirical proposition and moral proposition are incompatible, and CC and CCC are irreconcilable. So, what about modes? Is Hume's problem ultimately to be solved by Kripke?

Let's recall the traditional Kantian modal rationalism:

(MR_k) for any statement s, s is not inherently false if and only if s metaphysics may be true.

(MM_k) for any statement s, s logic may be true if and only if s metaphysics may be true.

Finally, it comes to the proposition of AC: conceivability implies possibility.

However, Kripke believes that there is a statement that must be true, and its true value can only be recognized through acquired experience. For example, morning star is evening star. After Kant's two-dimensional semantics, the modal of Kripke's rationality attempts to restore the modal of Kripke's rationality. He believes that any sentence is related to two-dimensional connotation. [9] When we regard a possible world as the real world, we can obtain the first dimensional connotation of a sentence; When we regard a possible world as a counterfactual world, we can obtain the second-dimensional connotation of this sentence. If a sentence is acquired inevitable, then its first dimension connotation is acquired accidental proposition; Its second dimension is the proposition of innate necessity. Thus, modal rationalism can still be established at the level of proposition:

(MR_c) for any proposition p, p is not inherently false if and only if p may be true.

(MM_c) for any proposition p, p logic may be true if and only if p metaphysics may be true.

(CP -) for any proposition p, if p is ideal, negative and conceivable, then p is possible.

(INC) for any proposition p, p is ideal negative and conceivable if and only if p is not inherently false.

(CP +) for any proposition p, if p is an ideal positive conceivable, then p is possible.

(IPC) for any proposition p, p is ideal positive and conceivable if and only if there is a consistent set of propositions Γ bring Γ Confirm p.

If it is proved that p is equivalent to a maximal uniform set containing p, then IPC and INC are equivalent [10]. They are equivalent to logical possibility in definition, so CP - and CP + are also equivalent [11].

Obviously, some extreme propositions are still powerless. By definition, ideal conceivability is equivalent to logical possibility. But our judgement about the possibility of a propositional logic is subject to our cognition. Wally believes that there are some propositions that we cannot know whether they are conceivable due to our cognitive limitations. [12] There are some propositions that we can't know whether we can imagine, such as Goldbach conjecture. Goldbach's conjecture is either true or false, and it is congenital, but we can not imagine whether it is logically possible until we prove it. Some other examples include: pain is not equal to the excitation of C nerve; Inevitably, God exists; [13] Inevitably, if the proposition about all micro-physical facts is true, then proposition of any phenomenal consciousness is true. There is nothing AC proposition can do about this issue. We call these problems modal errors.

So, if we change our thinking and choose modal empiricism. The principle of similarity is a theory that has attracted much attention in modal epistemology in recent years. Rocaros, the defender of this theory, provides an interpretation model with three necessary conditions:

(1) We know that o_1 has attribute F

(2) we know that both o_1 and o_2 have property P

(3) we know the relationship between attributes P and F. This relationship ensures that the individual of attribute P has the possibility of attribute F. [14]

Although it seems to restore the inference, this inference is only one possible inference.

In conclusion, modal rationalism seems to restore the AC proposition, but some scientific propositions are unimaginable. Modal empiricism restores inference, but it can only infer possibility and nothing else. If so, Hume has won after all.

6. Summary

To sum up this paper, Hume won, because people's understanding is always questionable and always needs an essence, which is human nature. But if we continue to explore the so-called truth, mankind will eventually fall into endless nothingness. Perhaps postmodernism like Rorty or Quine is the future of philosophy. So, does this philosophy have a future?

Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.

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