

LECTURE 13: CARNAP DECLares WAR ON METAPHYSICS

1. Two kinds of *pseudo-statements* (Scheinsätze)
 - (a) Those that violate syntactic rules
 - (b) Those that contain meaningless words
2. A word *a* is *meaningful* only if:
 - (a) *a* has a well-defined syntactic role;
 - (b) for any sentence $S(a)$ in which the word *a* occurs, we know:
 - i. inferential relations between $S(a)$ and other sentences,
 - ii. truth conditions for $S(a)$,
 - iii. procedures for determining if $S(a)$ is true, and
 - iv. the meaning of $S(a)$.
3. In some [all?] cases, the meaning of a word must ultimately be cashed out in terms of observation/protocol sentences.

(p. 63) “If the word is to receive an exact meaning, nothing less than the criterion of application must be given.”

(p. 76) “... the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification.”
4. How symbolic logic can cure our confusions

(p. 68) In a *correctly constructed* language all nonsensical sequences of words would violate some explicit grammatical rule.

(p. 68) Metaphysics could not even be expressed in a *logically constructed* language.
5. Some implications of logical syntax
 - (a) Existence is not a predicate
 - (b) “Nothing” is not a subject
 - (c) Not every predicate and subject can be combined [typing]
6. Exhaustive classification of meaningful statements

(Carnap seems to derive this idea from Wittgenstein.)

 - (a) Tautologies and contradictions
 - Say nothing about reality

- (b) Those whose truth-value is determined by the truth value of protocol sentences.
 - (p. 76) “With respect to all other [meaningful] statements the decision about truth or falsehood lies in the protocol sentences.”
 - (p. 77) “...all statements whatever that assert something are of an empirical nature and belong to factual science.”

7. Some pseudo-statements from various walks of life

- (a) Claims about ethical and aesthetic value
 - (p. 77) “It is altogether impossible to make a statement that expresses a value judgment.”
- (b) Metaphysical statements
 - i. Carnap chose to criticize Heidegger as a representative of what he thinks is a political menace. (And he was right!)
 - ii. “Metaphysics does indeed have content; only it is not theoretical content. ... [These statements] serve for the expression of the general attitude of the person towards life.”
- (c) Certain types of theological statement
 - Mythical versus mystical theology
- (d) Philosophical statements, including those made by Carnap!
 - “What remains is not statements, nor a theory, nor a system, but only a *method*; the method of logical analysis.”
- (e) Carnap: pseudo-statements aren’t necessarily bad; it’s only bad when they pretend to be genuine theoretical claims.

8. How does Carnap define “metaphysics”?

- (p. 76) The task which metaphysics sets itself: “to discover and formulate a kind of knowledge which is not accessible to empirical science.”
- (p. 76) “...knowledge that pretends to reach above or behind experience.”