

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.”