

On Rudolf Carnap's The Elimination of Metaphysics
Through Logical Analysis of Language

BY
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Sentences do not have rules, but rather rules are grafted onto or foisted onto the sentences after they are made. It would not be possible for us (human organisms) to agree on or construct the rules analytic philosophers allege to underlay language without beginning with empty sound, spoken lawlessly. Syntactic structure is, again, not so much an actual structure so much as a description. Grammar, again, not so much a thing which can generate (and from where would it generate?) sound, so much as a word describing the rhythm of sounds. Thus, a sentence can be meaningless and still “sound grammatical.” By eliminating metaphysics through logical analysis, physics too is eliminated because the matter of “this” arising from “that” is deemed invalid. Emergence, reduction, supervenience, divergence, and other words which have been, and are now, the currency of physics are ignored by the analytic because a blind eye is turned towards the reality of cross-talk being an everyday occurrence with the use of any word, which logical analysis fails to recognize. Furthermore, what it means to “cognize” is unclear and this word too may fall under the category of the meaningless metaphysical, as would the intention that cognitive content is something to “clarify.” If “clarify” is to be understood to denote “make clear” and we “clarify the content of scientific statements” as Carnap suggests, could we not render our sentences clear and invisible and end up with an empty page?

Even if it were accepted that metaphysics were eliminated a meta analysis would still be identifiable and hence disposable, once what all constitutes “analysis” were explained. Logical analysis lays its own foundation and grave as it starts by ignoring that it is chronologically impossible for a logical foundation for language to exist, as this would be analogous to requesting that a building's foundation be built using the building as a tool. Also, anyone against metaphysics should have nothing to say about what it means for there to exist any such thing as a “logical foundation.” Advancing knowledge by way of analogy, analysis, and analogizing can be just as sterile as metaphysics, since the meta analysis of analogizing is to illustrate a correspondence between two different entities in order to conclude that in some way they are completely the same. This is not a valid move, however, if our goal is to lay a foundation that is not sterile, and hence the task of logical analysis is but the systematic destruction of philosophizing, which in the history of metaphysics at least has the power of giving birth to conjecture. It should be further added that a logical analysis of language is not what happens here, nor is it wanted. because then this activity could not be done professionally. Russell and Chomsky both fall victim to the desire to bracket “language” to “human language” and, therefore, narrow the scope of logical analysis to the logos, or in other words: words. A narrow scope like this should not be desired, however, because there are other sources in nature which can sequence what can be called language, such as DNA, which, like sentences, is sequenced “one at a time” (this shifts the area of our investigation towards finding the singular selection). It is my suggestion that limiting language to human products is a mistake: a mistake that if left unchecked would lead to nothing less than everlasting human experimentation. Even death, Darwin says, has a “creative power” to select, selecting that which becomes a fossil which can find its way beneath the magnifying glass of the analyst searching for (and allegedly not creating) structure “underlying” that which he sees. But this is nothing more than a tracking activity, a tracking activity which does little to advance knowledge. It should be noted that a limit of human freedom is the inability to fulfill inclusive words that contain no designations. Just as the analyst can show up the fact that “God” denotes nothing in particular, so can I complain that “we” denotes nothing, thereby giving me license to propose that knowledge is never advanced. When a leader announces that “we” flew to the moon, inclusion in that statement means about as much as the statement “we” tortured a person to death. To be blunt: inclusion in historical achievement is always either actual (by the perpetrator) or mentally simulated (by the storyteller or her audience).