



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Rudolf Carnap

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19th Oct 2021

1. Introduction



(1891-1970)

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2. Biography
3. Space and the A Priori
4. *The Logical Structure of the World*
5. *Pseudoproblems of Philosophy* and Heidegger
6. *Logical Syntax of Language*
7. Linguistic Frameworks
8. Forerunner of Analytic Relativism



1. Introduction

- Logical Positivism/Logical Empiricism
- Relation to Hume's Empiricism
- Antipathy to Metaphysics
- Verification Principle
- More complex account – impact on Quine, Kuhn, Analytical Relativism, Metametaphysics



2. Biography

Ronsdorf (northwest Germany). Religious parents – moral and tolerant.

Jena, Freiburg in Bresgau – philosophy, maths, physics.

Philosophy of science. Kant.

Frege as teacher

Development of naturalistic view – Evolution, Physics, Psychology. WWI

Interest in methodological problems with relativity.

Russell's *Principia Mathematica*.

Der Raum (1921) – contradictory theories of space rooted in ambiguity.



2. Biography

Frege (logic) Russell (outlook)

Vienna with Schlick 1926-1931

Logical Structure of the World (Aufbau) (1928)

Neurath – relation to society and history.

Wittgenstein – analyticity and nonsense

Tarski & Polish Logicians– semantics

Prague 1931-1935 *Logical Syntax of Language* (1934)

USA 1935 – Chicago, Princeton, UCLA

“Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology” (1950)



2. Biography

Debate with Quine on Analyticity (1940-1950)

Influence on Kuhn (*Structure of Scientific Revolutions*)



3. Space and the A Priori

19thc development of non-Euclidean geometry – mathematical oddity.

(Kant on Euclidean geometry)

Empirical application with Einstein – curvature of space-time.

How to understand these systems? Implications for a priori.

Distinguished formal space (logical-mathematical), intuitive space (psychological – Neo-Kantian) physical (empirical applied).

No “real” space – different frameworks and tasks.

Influence of Neo-Kantianism and Empirical Science.



4. The Logical Structure of the World (1928)

Rigorous development of Russell's epistemology, using Russell's logic.

Seen as classic statement of epistemological foundationalism.

Use of Constitution System. (Kantian influence)

Inputs from Gestalt psychology. Recollection of part-similarity

Building up levels of objects. Showing connections to empirical given.

Autopsychological, Objects, Heteropsychological, Cultural Objects



5. PseudoProblems of Philosophy

Debate between Heidegger and Cassirer at Davos 1929

Relationship to Kant and Neokantianism.

Anti--rationalistic reading of CPR – relativity to Dasein, concrete, historical. Finitude of human life, being-towards-death.

Integrating personalist projects of Nietzsche/Kierkegaard with Husserlian phenomenology and Dilthey's historicism.

Cassirer - Leibnizian ideal of trans-national universal language –
Philosophy of Symbolic Forms

Social and Political factors (Nationalism, Socialism)



5. PseudoProblems of Philosophy

Carnap impressed by Heidegger – studied *Being and Time*

Chose Heidegger as example of ‘metaphysical pseudo-sentences’

“Nothingness itself nothings” [Das Nichts selbst nichtens].

Not simply unverifiable, or neologism, but violation of logical form.

Existential quantification and negation – not substantive or verb.

Disagreement on role of logic and exact sciences.

Overthrown in H for metaphysics

Metaphysics overthrown by Carnap

Very specific kind of ‘metaphysics’



6. Logical Syntax

Fundamental difference between logical and factual statements. Why?

Insight from Wittgenstein about tautology. Analytic.

Logic says nothing about the world. Construction of logical language.

Language and Metalanguage. Logical Syntax.

Clarify 'proof', 'derivation', 'logical validity'.

Debates between classical logic and intuitionism as language choice.

Principle of Tolerance: 'In logic there are no morals'.

Later inclusion of Semantics (Tarski) and Pragmatics in Metatheory



7. Linguistic Frameworks

“Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology” (1950)

Traditional debates – realism/idealism, phenomenism, physicalism

Transformed into formal problems of use of language schema.

Linguistic Framework – artificially constructed

Internal/External questions

Theoretical/Pragmatic questions

No Theoretical External questions.



8. Impact

- Pluralism in Logic – construction of formal systems – pragmatic question of their applicability.
- Framework idea. Conceptual Schemes, Paradigms.
(Quine, Kuhn)
- Anti-realism – rejection of Absolute conception of reality. Ontological pluralism (Putnam)
- Recent work in Metametaphysics (“Neo-Carnapian Nay-sayers” – Putnam, Hirsch, Sidelle, Yablo, Thomasson)

