Carnap, Reichenbach, Freyer. The Social Adaptiveness of Values, in the Context of Logical Empiricism and the German Youth Movement

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Andreas Kamlah 1977 on Reichenbach and Non-Cognitivism

„Reichenbach‘s non-cognitivist ethics can be traced back to his youth in the German Youth Movement, therefore it is by no means a result of his logical empiricism.“ (S. 480)

• Non-cognitivism is a result of the German YM
• BUT: Logical Empiricism and non-cognitivism are two different things
• AND: Non-cognitivism is untenable after all (rather, the moral realism of the Frankfurt School is a more plausible conception)
Today

• New archival findings (Carnap):
  – Politische Rundbriefe 1918, Le Seur 1916, 1911 lecture
  – Diaries and Readinglists
  – Documents on Buchenbach 1920 and Erlangen 1923

• Examination of the relevant literature on the German YM, writings by Wyneken, Freyer, etc.

• New systematic insights
  – LE and NC are not separate from but are partly the results of the German YM
  – NC is more plausible than traditional realist meta-ethical conceptions
Immanuel Kant  
(1724-1804)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel  
(1770-1831)

Chaim. H. Steinthal  
(1823-1899)

Hermann Cohen  
(1842-1918)

Georg Simmel  
(1858-1918)

Felix Krueger  
(1874-1948)

Gustav Wyneken  
(1875-1964)

Felix Behrend  
(1880-1957)

Hans Freyer  
(1887-1969)

Alfred Kurella  
(1895-1975)

Rudolf Carnap  
(1891-1970)

Hans Reichenbach  
(1891-1953)

Wihelm Dilthey  
(1833-1911)
Denn die Individualität, die sich als Sollen darstellt, ist doch keine unhistorische, materialfreie, nur etwa aus dem sogenannten «Charakter» bestehende. Sie ist vielmehr dadurch mitbestimmt oder schließt es als gar nicht zu eliminierendes Moment ein, daß dieser Mensch etwa Bürger eines bestimmten Staates ist. Alles, was ihn umgibt und was er von je erlebt hat, die stärksten Triebe seines Naturdaseins, wie die flüchtigsten Eindrücke — alles dies formt an jenem flutenden Leben der Persönlichkeit, und aus alledem wächst, wie eine Wirklichkeit, so ein Sollen. Aus dem schlechthin individuellen Leben dieses Menschen heraus (denn ein anderes als ein individuelles ist eben nicht denkbar), zu dem sein Staatsbürgerdasein gehört, erhebt sich deshalb seine Pflicht des Waffendienstes, als ein schlechthin objektiver Überbau oder Nebenbau zu seiner Wirklichkeit.
• There is something external that determines values
• Though values depend on the subject and probably even on the historical context ...
• ... we are by no means free to choose our values
‘Free German Youth, on their own initiative, under their own responsibility, and with deep sincerity, are determined independently to shape their own lives. For the sake of this inner freedom they will under any and all circumstances take united action.’
• We do not blindly trust our cultural heritage
• Rather we trust:
  – Our own responsibility ...
  – ... which is rooted in the life of society
• Thus, the Meißner Formula leads to a combination of the notion of responsibility and self-trust on the one hand and ethics as a joint work of society on the other hand
The desired end of the Free Students can be summarized as follows:

The supreme moral ideal is exemplified in the person who determines his own values freely and independently of others and who, as a member of society, demands this autonomy for all members and of all members.
HANS REICHENBACH

THE RISE OF SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY, LOS ANGELES, LONDON
(1951)
We may differ in many respects, perhaps about the question of whether the state should own the means of production, or whether the divorce laws should be made easier, or whether a world government should be set up that controls the atom bomb. But we can discuss such problems if we both agree about a **democratic principle** which I oppose to your anarchist principle:

*Everybody is entitled to set up his own moral imperatives and to demand that everyone follow these imperatives.*

This democratic principle supplies the precise formulation of my appeal to everybody to trust his own volitions,
Democratic Non-Cognitivism

- Non-cognitivism is **not necessarily** democratic
- But the acceptance of non-cognitivism enforces us to develop **any** strategy to deal with **deviant value systems**
  - We might simply ignore them  
    - **Ayer**
  - We might try to take them as seriously as possible  
    - **Reichenbach, Carnap**
  - We might adopt a totalitarian policy  
    - **Freyer**
ETHISCHE NORMEN UND POLITIK
Von Professor Dr. Hans Freyer, Leipzig
(Kant-Studien 35, 1930, 99-114)
The State, according to Freyer and Schmitt:

State $S$, which is based on a closed system of values $V$

Prepare for a war/
Go for a war

Enemy State $S'$, which is based on a conflicting closed system of value $V'$

The fittest survives (and cultural progress takes place)

Friends of the state:

- $S_1$, accepts $V$ and $S$
- $S_2$, accepts $V$ and $S$
- $S_3$, accepts $V$ and $S$

Enemies of the state:

- $S_4$, opposes $V$ or $S$
- $S_5$, opposes $V$ or $S$
- $S_6$, opposes $V$ or $S$

(1) Become educated or neutralized

(2) Destroy the state and establish a new one
Carnap (= Kernberger), Oktober 1918

Rudolf Carnap, Prag:
Theoretische Fragen u. praktische Entscheidungen.
(Natur und Geist 2, 1934, S. 257-260)

LOGIC

Rudolf Carnap, Dr. Phil., S.D.
In: Factors Determining Human Behavior, 1937, 107-118
I shall now try to indicate more concretely, beyond these general principles, the views about ends and means which I have held at least since the Vienna time, if not earlier, and which I still hold today. A number of my friends in the Vienna Circle probably shared these views in their essential features; but in detail, naturally, there were important differences. It was and still is my conviction that the great problems of the organization of economy and the organization of the world at the present time, in the era of industrialization, cannot possibly be solved by “the free interplay of forces”, but require rational planning. For the organization of economy this means socialism in some form; for the organization of the world it means a gradual development toward a world government. However, neither socialism nor world government are regarded as absolute ends; they are only the organizational means which, according to our present knowledge, seem to give the best promise of leading to a realization of the ultimate aim. This aim is a form of life in which the well-being and the development of the individual is valued most highly, not the power of the state. Removing the obstacles, the main causes of suffering, such as war, poverty, disease, is merely the negative side of the task. The positive side is to improve and enrich the life of the individuals and their relations in family, friendship, professional work, and community. (S. 83)
The State, according to Carnap and Reichenbach:

A State $S$, which is based on an open system of values $V$, whose only aim is to realize the ultimate aim:

- Well-being and development of the individual
- Cultural and economical progress

State $S'$, which is committed to values $V'$ being compatible with the ultimate aim

Discussion

- $S_1$, accepts $V$
- $S_2$, accepts $V$
- $S_3$, accepts $V$
- $S_4$, accepts $V'$
- $S_5$, accepts $V'$
- $S_6$, accepts $V'$
Democracy is able to deal with a Freyerian policy

Freyerian State $S$, being based on a closed system of values $V$

War, with the purpose of self-defense and/or destruction of the Freyerian State

Carnapian State $S'$, being based on an open system of values whose only purpose is the well-being and the development of the individual

Friends of the state:
- $S_1$, accepts $V$ and $S$
- $S_2$, accepts $V$ and $S$
- $S_3$, accepts $V$ and $S$

Enemies of the state:
- $S_4$, opposes $V$ or $S$
- $S_5$, opposes $V$ or $S$
- $S_6$, opposes $V$ or $S$

Become educated or neutralized

Disestablish the Freyerian state and establish a Carnapian one
• For Carnap and Reichenbach values are by no means a question of taste
• Even a non-cognitivist can (and should) commit herself to certain **non-negotiable values**
• The non-cognitivist is just suspicious of philosophers who want to add metaphysical proofs to their non-negotiable values (= useless metaphysical ornament)