Carnap's notion of analyticity and the two wings of analytic philosophy

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Kant's notion of analyticity

- For Kant, a statement of the form "A is B" is analytically true, iff B is attributing a property to A that is already somewhat contained in the notion A

- Thus, for example,

    (1)   A bachelor is an unmarried man.

    is an analytic truth, for Kant

- The language (the concepts) involved here are somewhat naturally *given*

N-analytic philosophy

- The mainstream of post-WWII analytic philosophy (hereafter: **n-analytic philosophy**) shared Kant's attitude to take the language for granted

- Unlike Kant, however, n-analytic philosophers took the language to be *an empirical entity*

- Whether and in what sense (1) is an analytic truth or not depends on the empirical status of our language

Naturalism and the first dogma

- **Davidson: [1] […] the task of a theory of meaning as I conceive it is not to change, to improve, or reform a language, but to describe and understand it.**
- We do not *stipulate* meanings but *investigate* them
- There is (virtually) no truth by virtue of meaning because meaning always interferes with reference
- This leads to an empirically informed version of Kant's transcendental notion of analyticity
- → Quine (1952): **The first dogma of empiricism** has to be rejected

And Carnap?

- For Carnap, analyticity is a matter of convention and „meaning postulates":

[2] Our explication [...] will refer to semantical language-systems, not to natural languages. It shares this character with most of the explications of philosophically important concepts given in modern logic, e.g., Tarski's explication of truth. It seems to me that the problems of explicating concepts of this kind for natural languages are of an entirely different nature. (Carnap, 1952, p. 66)

Quine (desperately): Hähh!?
[3] [W]hy all this *creative* reconstruction, all this *make-believe*?

The point is that Carnap was concerned
with something entirely different
(and somewhat incommensurable):
a-analytic philosophy

A-analytic philosophy considers artificial languages

- Carnap was simply not interested in „natural language" (n-analyticity)
- For Carnap, analyticity *is* a property of *statements* but not of statements from any empirically given source: **analytic statements belong to an artificially construed analytic realm**
- Carnap developed a program of **a-analytic philosophy** that was based on *language planning* and the construction of *artificial languages*
- These languages *are analytical as a whole. We talk analytical, if we talk these languages* (and we do not talk analytical, of course, if we talk any natural language)

The tasks of a-analytic philosophy

First task:
Construe the
analytic realm

A A pure mathematical realm of analytic entities (structuralism, logicism)

Second task:
Talk analytical

F Construe a normative framework

R Reconstruct the empirical world

The empirical world

A Mathematical structuralism (The algebraic strategy)

- *Aufbau*: Consider „arrow diagrams" („Pfeilfiguren") AD
- An analytic description of a certain matter of fact, by means of the structuralist option, is a description that can be boiled down to ADs (= PSDD)
- Foundationalism issue: A predicate P either is represented by no AD at all or by infintely many ADs
- PSDD have to be „founded" (Carnap, Lewis)
- We assume that this strategy works

A Logicism
(The logical strategy)

- *Logical Syntax* etc.: let L be a formal language, i.e., a set of formulas being closed under logical consequence
- A sentence of L that follows from any premise is called *analytic*
- In order to increase or decrease the amount of analytic sentences we may add or remove „meaning postulates"
- (Quine: no meaning postulates beyond the laws of „pure logic"
- Carnap: such a pure logical framework would not provide any useful analytic realm at all)
- Foundationalism issue: incompleteness (ignored)

Second task:
# Counteract reality in an analytical way

- N-analytic philosophy is entirely **descriptive** – the aim is *to understand* how language (and the world out there) works
  → „naturalism" (cf. Reply to Strawson, p. 933)

- A-analytic philosophy is **normative** – the aim is *to counteract reality* by means of the analytic framework (in the sense of task 1)

- **Two examples:** PSDD, decision theory

PSDD

The framework

- Purely structural descriptions (PSDD) transform any (empirical) concept into an analytic representation

- The sources are recollected similarities between elementary experiences r of a subject s

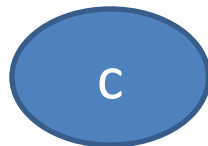- Quasianalysis allows us to represent any concept c of s by means of r
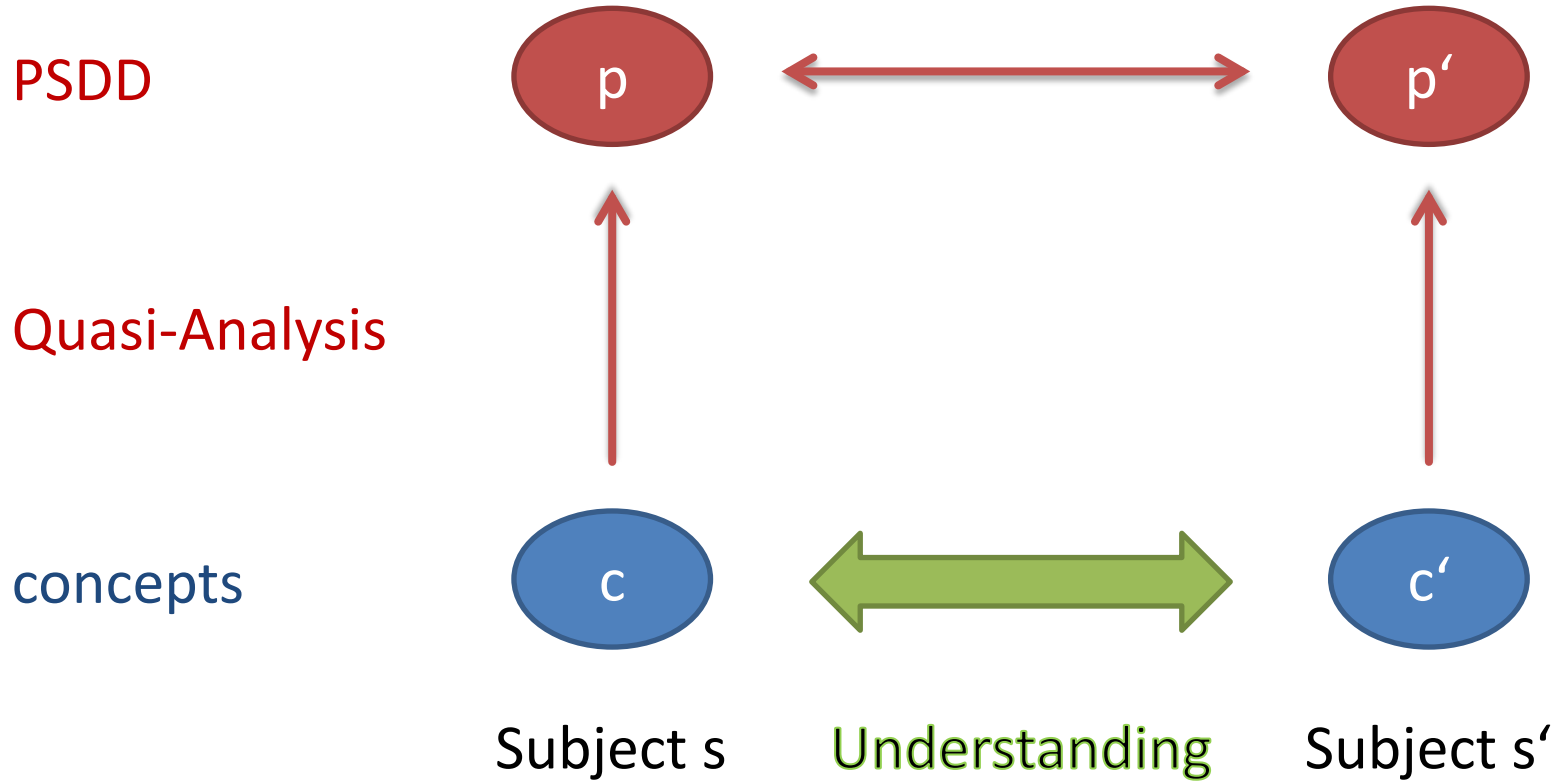
PSDD

p
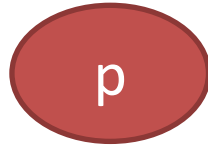
Quasi-Analysis

concepts

c

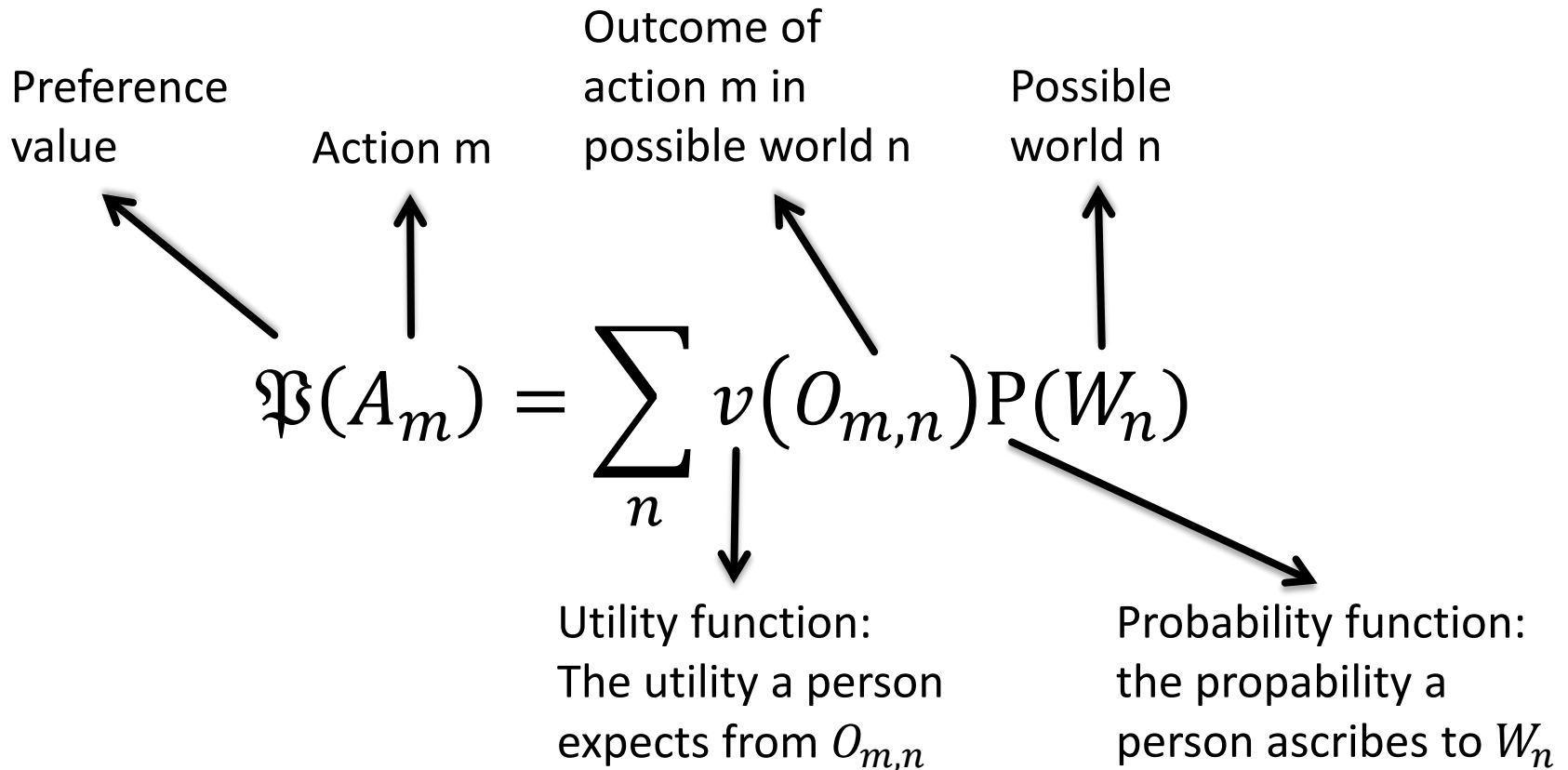Subject s

Hermeneutic aspects

- A crucial merit of analyticity (in the sense of a-analytic philosophy) is that analytic entities are *universally communicable*

- Analytic entities do not carry any subjective (intentional) burden

- Everything an analytic entitiy mirrors has exactly the same (analytic) look for everyone

- PSDD allow us *to communicate* concepts, by means of „intersubjective coordination" (§ 146)

Decision Theory

The n-analytic version

Preference
value

Action m

Outcome of
action m in
possible world n

Possible
world n

$$\mathfrak{P}(A_m) = \sum_n v(O_{m,n})\mathrm{P}(W_n)$$

Utility function:
The utility a person
expects from $O_{m,n}$

Probability function:
the propability a
person ascribes to W_n
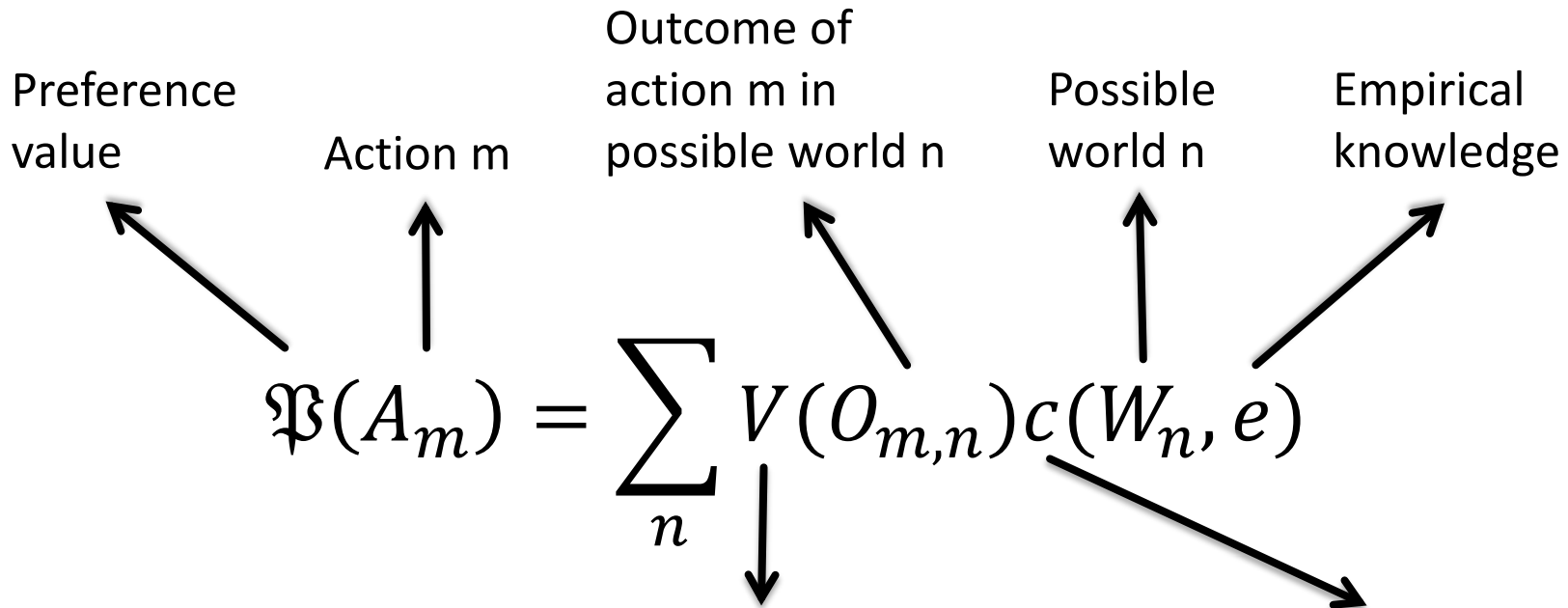
N-analytic versus a-analytic

- The n-analytic standpoint in decision theory (Savage, de Finetti) recommends a descriptive stance:

- The empirical hypothesis is that individuals *in fact* decide in such a way that they choose the action that obtains the highest preference value

- Carnap's a-analytic standpoint recommends to take the decision theoretic framework in a normative way: you may choose the very action that obtains the highest preference value

- For that purpose the whole framework has to be conceptualized differently:

The a-analytic version

Preference value

Action m

Outcome of action m in possible world n

Possible world n

Empirical knowledge

$$\mathfrak{P}(A_m) = \sum_n V(O_{m,n})c(W_n, e)$$

Choose the very action A_m that obtains the highest preference value $\mathfrak{P}$

Value function: reflects the values of a perfectly rational human being

Confirmation function: the objective degree of likeliness of W_n, against the background of e

Become a p.r.h.b.

Adopt c rather than P

The robot as a role model

[5] Thinking about the design of a robot will help us finding rules of rationality. Once found, these rules can be applied not only in the construction of a robot but also in advising human beings in their effort to make their decisions as rational as their limited abilities permit. (Carnap, 1962, p. 309)

- Even perfectly rational human beings may adopt entirely incompatible value systems
- There exist perfectly rational Social Democrats but also perfectly rational Nazis
- But still, only perfectly rational human beings act in a way that their actions are always in perfect accordance with their values (thus, we may desire Nazis to be irrational in some way but Social Democrats are demanded to be perfectly rational)

Aesthetical and political aspects

Toward a radical reform of life

- We use PSDD and the decision theoretic framework in order to establish new ways of reasoning
- We want to establish human beings of a new form (following the role model of the robot)
- This is a both an aesthetical and a political task

The agenda of „New Objectivity" (Franz Roh) and the *Aufbau*

- For Roh, a piece of art has to be based on "nature's own expression" (Eigenausdruck der Natur)

- This does not mean to somewhat copy nature: "not a depicture [Abmalen] but rather a *rigorous erection, construction* of objects" is the aim of New Objectivity

[6] One does not proceed, therefore, from the objects to the mind, but from the latter to the objects, whereby the greatest stress is put in keeping the mental structure [geistiges Gefüge] clean and clear. This second world of objects exactly resembles the first, the existent but remains to be a purified, referring one [gereinigte, bezogene]. (Nach-Expressionismus, p. 37)

The World

The World
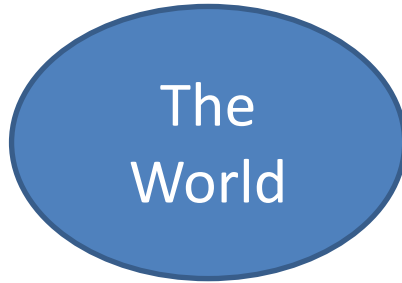
The new objective standpoint of the artist construes
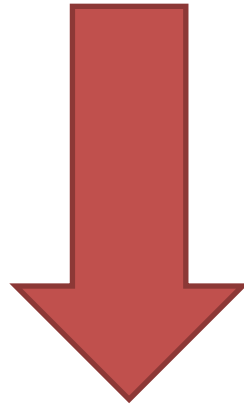
The new objective standpoint of the philosopher construes

Abstract
Painting
Collage
Photograph
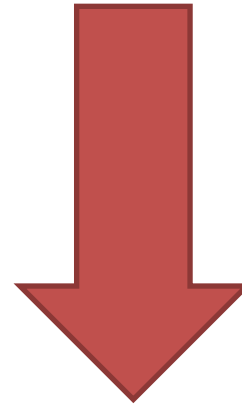
PSDD

PSDD have roughly the same normative function as a piece of new objective art

Rational planning as a form of life

[7] 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 of 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 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. (Schilpp 1963, 83)

- But rational planning, for Carnap, is also the major task of philosophy
- Therefore and insofar the whole philosophical enterprise is deeply political

Rationality as a worldview

[8] The practical handling of philosophical problems and the discovery of their solutions does not have to be purely intellectual, but will always contain emotional elements and intuitive methods. The *justification*, however, has to take place before the forum of the understanding [vor dem Forum des Verstandes]; here we must not refer to our intuition or emotional needs. We too, have "emotional needs" ["Bedürfnisse des Gemüts"] in philosophy, but they are filled by clarity of concepts, precision of methods, responsible theses, achievement through cooperation in which each individual plays his part. (Carnap, 1967, p. xvii)

Two wings of analytic philosophy

Carnap on language planning

[9] Only slowly did I recognize how large the divergence is between the views of the **two wings of analytic philosophy in the question of natural versus constructed languages**: the view which I shared with my friends in the Vienna Circle and later with many philosophers in the United States, and the view of those philosophers who are chiefly influenced by G. E. Moore and Wittgenstein. (Schilpp, 1963, p. 68)

Who is the enemy?

- Carnap distances himself here from the (basically British) tradition of so-called „ordinary language philosophy" (cf. Strawson's contribution to the Schilpp volume!)

- However, the rejection of language planning is by no means a unique selling point of OLP

- Thus, Carnap's definitions of „first" and „second" wing have to be modified:

- First Wing: a-analytic philosophy

- Second Wing: n-analytic philosophy

The first wing is the left wing

- There is another, more famous, distinction between two different "wings" of philosophy, namely, Neurath's distinction between the "left wing" and the "right wing" of the Vienna Circle

- Left wing: Neurath, Carnap, Frank, Hahn

- Right wing: Wittgenstein, Schlick, Waismann, Feigl

- The first wing of analytic philosophy (= a-analytic philosophy) obviously *is* the left wing of the Vienna Circle (one may add Tarski and Reichenbach here and a small number of other representatives of this movement in the US)
- The second wing of analytic philosophy (= n-analytic philosophy) converges with the right wing of the Vienna Circle
- However, the vast majority of analytic philosophy after 1945 certainly belongs to the "second wing" which almost entirely ruled out the "first wing", during the six decades past (cf. Reisch 2005)
- But:

Who is right?

It depends!

- n-analytic philosophy is a linguistic project – go for it, if your task is to do linguistics
- a-analytic philosophy is a philosophical project in a much more traditional sense – go for it, if your task is to do philosophy

- You may also need the frameworks of n-analytic philosophy, for your normative tasks of a-analyticity (i.e., there is a certain amount of complementarity involved here)
- But the n-analytic frameworks will have an entirely different function here, we somewhat have to transform them, in order to make them a-analytically useful